BLUEPRINT

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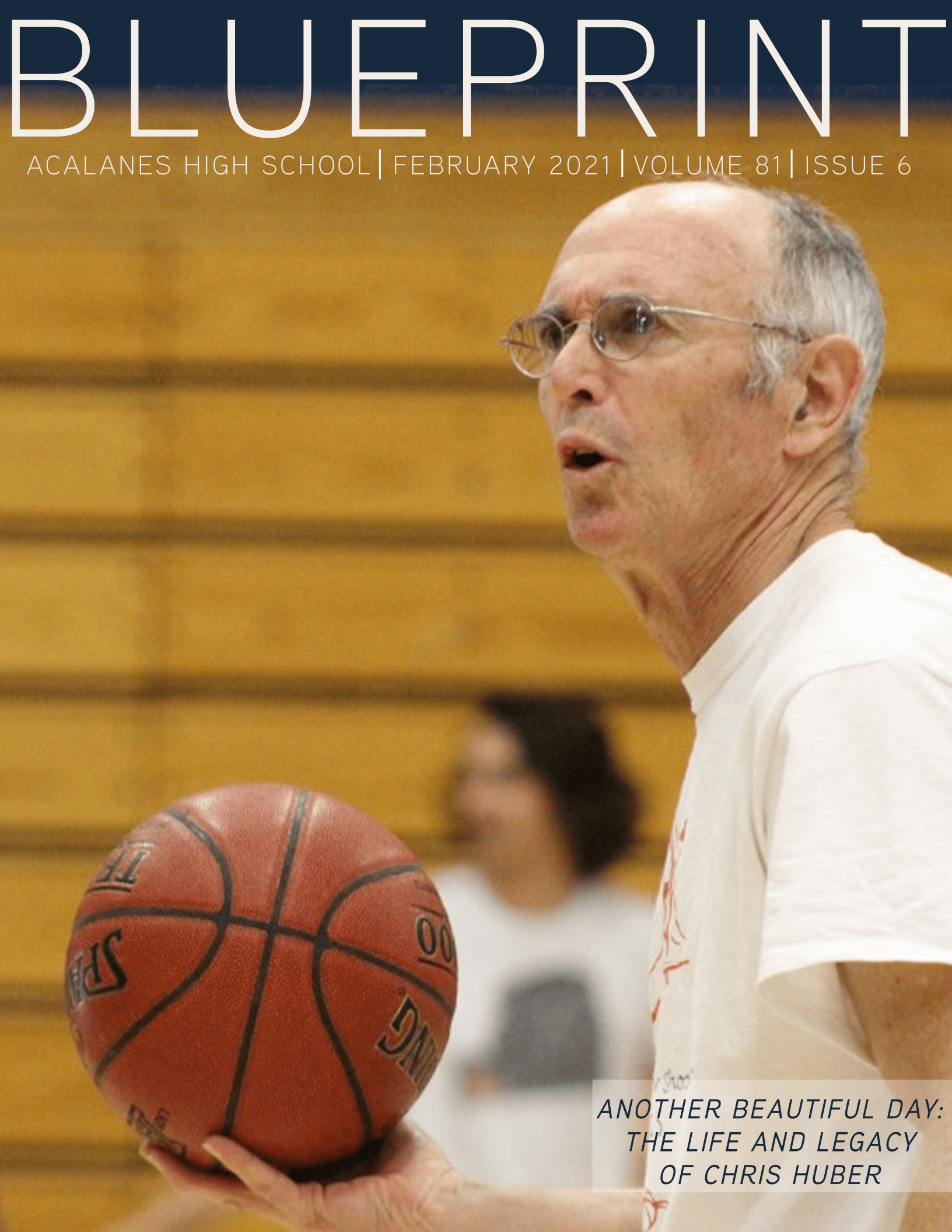

ANOTHER BEAUTIFUL DAY: THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF CHRIS HUBER

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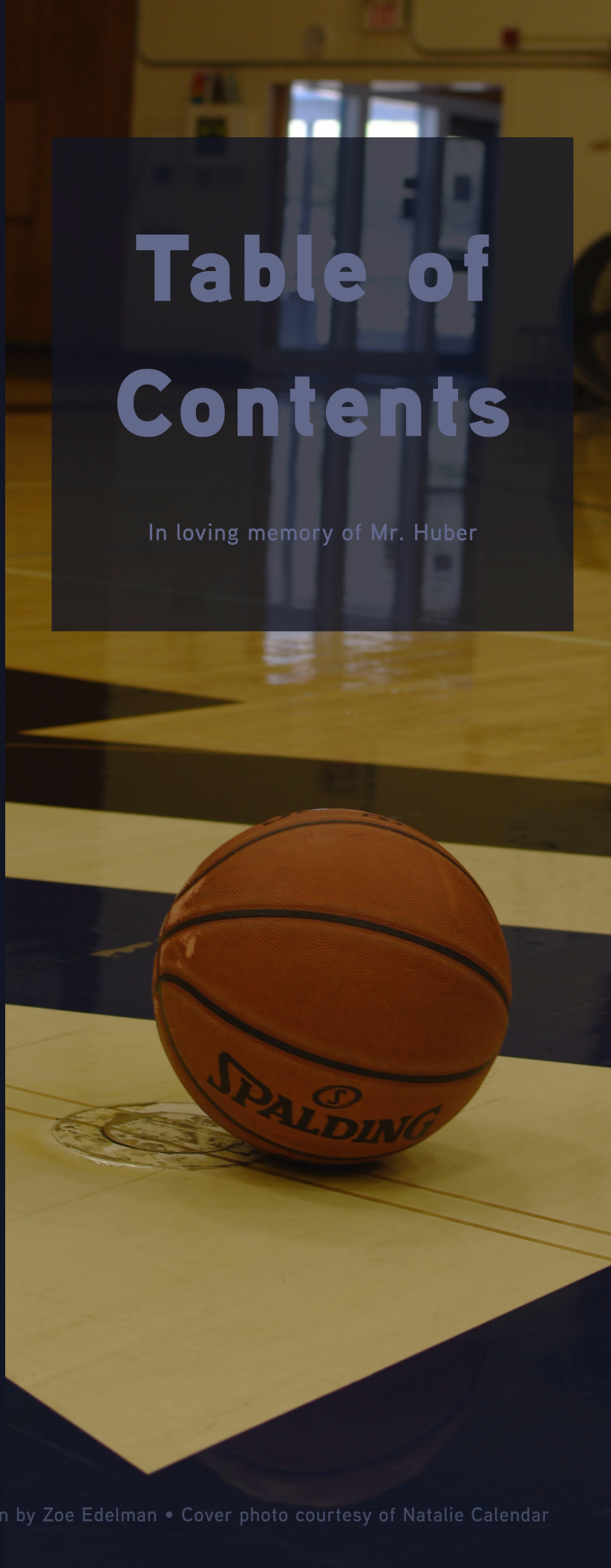
In loving memory of Mr. Huber



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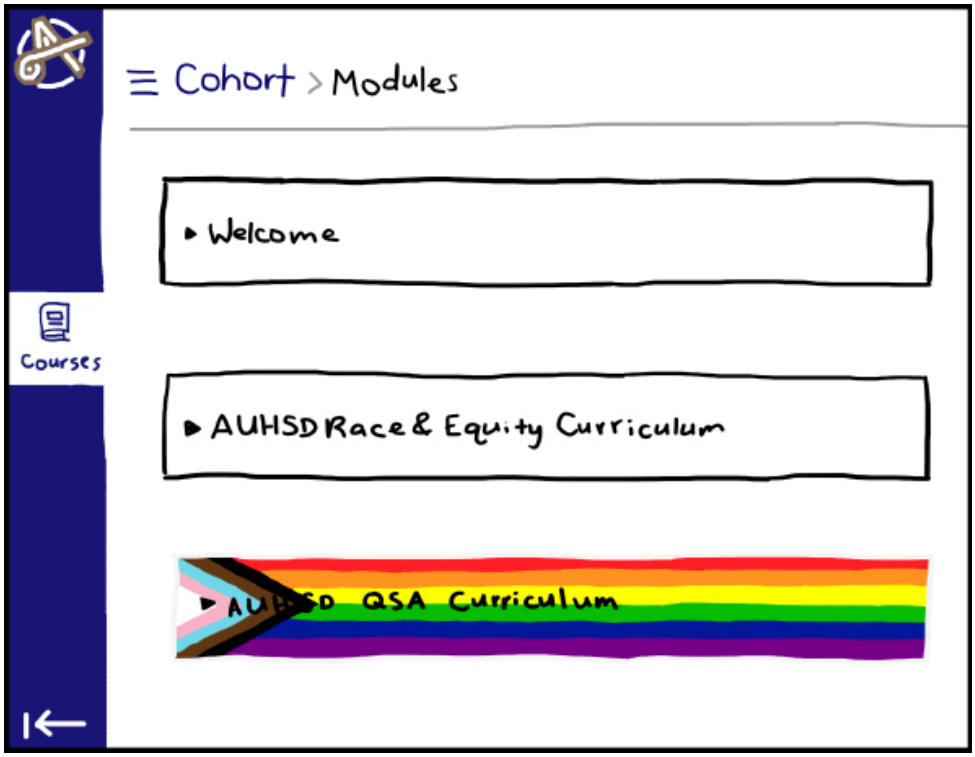
QSA Partners with AUHSD Schools and District to Create Cohort Module

The equity workshop will educate students on LGBTQ+ history and misconceptions to increase student empathy.

Stella Heo, Michael Balmat, Marisa Guerra Echeverria, and Erin Hambidge | Online Editor-in-Chief and Staff Writers



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Increasing calls for education about the issues of race in the U.S. inspired the Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) to create cohort academies and teach Acalanes High School students about race and equity. To bring light to LGBTQ+ issues, the district is partnering with Acalanes's Queer Straight Alliance (QSA) club and Campolindo and Miramonte High School's Sexuality and Gender Alliance (SAGA) clubs.

QSA and SAGA clubs at Campolindo and Miramonte worked with the district to create the first LGBTQ+ equity cohort module.

Every year since 2003, QSA teaches freshman English classes at Acalanes about LGBTQ+ terms and issues, and this year, to expand the program, QSA reached out to other schools in the district to create a district-wide lesson.

"[QSA Co-President and junior Emerson Brown] and I knew that Acalanes was the only school to have Peer Ed, so we wanted to collaborate with the other schools to make the level of LGBTQ+ education across the district equal. On top of that, having a broader community of fellow LGBTQ+ people is always helpful in making members of the community feel less alone," QSA Co-President and junior Autumn Long said.

In addition to wanting to expand teachings outside of Acalanes, QSA wanted to create the cohort after noticing a lack of teaching on LGBTQ+ topics and a survey taken by all Acalanes students showed an interest in learning about the issues.

"While I believe talking about race is crucial, oftentimes other forms of inequity get pushed aside. When we got the results of surveys on what students wanted going forward, many put down LGBTQ+ issues," Long said. "Even before we got the results of the survey, [Brown] and I and our friends that go to other schools noticed the lack of education high school students get on LGBTQ+ topics, even with the little amount that is taught in [Human Social Development]."

The club began educating teachers about LGBTQ+ issues after noticing many teachers lacked prior education on LGBTQ+ topics.

"We started with a smaller group of teachers: the Acalanes Equiteam. That 'workshop' for them went well, so [Leadership teacher Katherine] Walton and [QSA advisor Erik] Honda agreed that we should go forward and educate a broader group of teachers," Long said.

After successfully training several teachers, QSA presented the idea of a cohort module at a district LGBTQ+ meeting, and after receiving positive feedback, the club began working with other clubs around AUHSD.

"Being close friends with the Acalanes QSA presidents has made it very easy to communicate and work with each other. We all want to make sure that every student has equal education and access to resources so we proposed to get the entire district involved," Campolindo SAGA Co-President and junior Aeryn Armstrong-Azhar said.

Given the brief, two 45-minute periods available to present the module, student organizers condensed the information into two lessons covering the most important aspects of the LGBTQ+ community.

The first half of the proposed lesson will focus on the basic terminology associated with sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression.

"We want to talk about facts, to some extent, so that the goal of the presentation is to introduce sort of the basic framework of these issues. So just like a basic level of knowledge that a lot of people don't really have," Miramonte SAGA Vice President and junior Abby Wallach said.

The curriculum will also cover current laws in place to ensure LGBTQ+ student's protection on campus. These legislations include Assembly Bill 537 and Assembly Bill 1266.

Bill 537 incorporated perceived or actual gender orientation into existing non-discrimination laws in California public schools and protects LGBTQ+ related student clubs such as QSA. Bill 1266 affirms the rights of students to use facilities that align with their gender identities, regardless of their gender on record, and allows students to play on sports teams consistent with that gender identity.

QSA and SAGA stressed the importance of framing sexual orientation and gender identity in a manner accessible for all students, as everyone, no matter how they choose to express themselves, possesses both.

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AUHSD Makes Revisions to Title IX Sexual Assault Policy

Trigger Warning: This article may contain triggering material. Sexual assault, sexual harassment, and rape are mentioned.

The District provides an update on Trump Administration regulations on Sexual Discrimination and Assault

Marisa Guerra Echeverria, Erin Hambidge, and Izzy Smith | Staff Writers

Since Congress first passed Title IX in the Education Amendments of 1972, the law has a history of providing equal rights and protections for those facing sex discrimination, including sexual harassment and assault, in federally-funded education institutions. While Title IX built up an equity-based reputation from its support of women in instances of discrimination, not all of its current regulations provide adequate protection for victims of sexual assault.

The AUHSD Governing Board revised several of the District's sexual assault policies on Jan. 13 and Dec. 9 in response to the Title IX laws passed by the Trump administration in May 2020.

Title IX of the Education Amendment Act of 1972 is a civil rights law that prevents discrimination based on sex in federally funded educational institutions. Sex-based discrimination acts as a larger umbrella policy for sexual harassment, rape, and sexual assault, among other issues.

On May 6, 2020, The US Department of Education, headed by Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos, released new Title IX regulations regarding sexual harassment. The revisions increase the protection of students accused of sexual assault by reinforcing the accusor's right to due process, or their right to a fair trial. Many, however, regard the revisions as severely harmful to accusers' rights.

"Over the last four years, the Trump Administration and former Secretary DeVos enacted harmful policies that eroded protections for students," Congressman Mark DeSaulnier said as quoted by Press Secretary Ben Enos. "The changes made to Title IX deny survivors their civil rights and make our students less safe."

With these new changes, investigations into occurrences of sexual harassment will take much longer to complete.

"Investigations are going to be longer. It's going to put a lot more weight on making sure that people accused of sexual harassment have due process. And the consequences will just be delayed because of that investigation," Associate Superintendent of Administrative Services and Title IX Coordinator Amy McNamara said.

Using First Amendment policies, these rights ensure that an accused person cannot be deprived of their education over a sexual assault allegation. The law also states that both parties must be taken to court and cross-examined for credibility, with the accused receiving written reassurance that they are believed to be innocent.

"Now the [accuser] has the right to question the victim on cross-examination. So that's a little alarming for [the District] because I know how traumatic that can be for students who have been sexually assaulted, especially on campus," McNamara said.

The new changes also redefined the definition of sexual misconduct, saying that only the most severe instances warrant investigation. In the instance that sexual assault or harassment occurred, the victim must take the case directly to the police, not their resident advisor.

DeVos's revisions emphasize a hands-off approach to dealing with sexual assault off-campus. While California law states that a school is responsible for handling any reported cases of sexual assault/harassment that occurred off-campus, the new Title IX laws say that anything that occurs outside of school on the weekends, or in summer is not the school's responsibility to investigate.

Past administrations, such as the Obama Administration, took a different approach in their Title IX policy, which protected the victim rather than the accused. Some added safety measures included exemption from academic, extracurricular, educational activities in which the accuser and the victim could coincide. However, the Trump Administration significantly limited the jurisdiction of Title IX policies, meaning that these measures do not apply to all instances of harassment.

"I have to call an attorney every time something happens where it might rise to Title IX to make sure it is a Title IX investigation [to investigate]...It's a very complex approach to Title IX now when under the Obama administration, we had a duty to step in and investigate everything that [took] place in a school to make sure students were supported and those proper investigations were done," McNamara said.

In response to the newly restricted Title IX regulations enacted in August 2020, the AUHSD revised policies to adapt to the new framework. In starting this process, the new District policies must not interfere with state or federal law.

"When we have a policy, the California School Boards' Association writes a model policy, and they'll say [that] under Title IX changes, these policies probably need to be reexamined by our district. And [that there is] better language [to include] that meets both California law and this

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WHAT'S TITLE IX?
TITLE IX WORKS TO END GENDER DISCRIMINATION. RIGHT NOW, IT'S WORKING TO ADDRESS POLICY TO PROTECT SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS
ACA 23
HOWEVER, TITLE IX CURRENTLY PROTECTS THE ASSAILANT MORE THAN THE VICTIM

Blueprint Graphic/Zoe Edelman

LGBTQ+ Module

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"While it is true that there's only a certain group of people that have been discriminated against for their sexual orientation and gender identity, there are shared characteristics and we want to present it that way," Wallach said.

The lack of LGBTQ+ representation in the district is one of the larger issues student organizers hope to overcome with the implementation of the cohort module.

"I know that as a queer student in the Acalanes Union High School District, every time LGBTQ issues are mentioned in curriculum, that is very important to me because I just haven't had a lot of exposure to LGBTQ historical figures or events or themes at all," Wallach said.

The second half of the lesson addresses the bias against the LGBTQ+ community, which persists as a local and national issue, and how that bias impacts everyday life for students.

"I wish that more people would be more educated about and less biased against transgender people. I feel like in California at least, people are much more aware and accepting of people who have sexualities that aren't straight than people who have genders that don't align with their gender assigned at birth," Long said.

Additionally, the District hopes that the increased awareness of bias will reduce the high number of microaggressions against the LGBTQ+ community reported through the new Bias Incident Reporting System (BIRT) this year.

"We've given some students surveys on what we were missing in the early days [of the equity lessons]. And we heard loud and clear from the student surveys: homophobia is something we really have to combat on campus," McNamara said. "The other thing is in looking at the [BIRT] reporting that students have been doing, homophobic comments have come up over and over again… This is something we need to talk about."

The presentation specifically emphasizes the importance of recognizing the harm that common microaggressions and slurs inflict upon members of the LGBTQ+ community. The student organizers hope that this awareness will discourage all future microaggressions, which reinforce damaging stereotypes and diminish the LGBTQ+ experience.

"We want to talk about...just [like the] different sort of homophobic acts and how they can be harmful. [We have] the end goal of discussing how to avoid those and how to not just be an ally, but actively be an ally and speaking out against microaggressions and misconceptions," Wallach said.

By building up student consciousness of these misconceptions and their harmful effects on the LGBTQ+ community in both lessons, the student organizers hope to encourage others to take everyday action towards allyship.

"People need to know why it's so important to put their pronouns in Zoom or anywhere else they have their names. It's such an easy thing to do, and it is a tiny show of allyship for transgender people," Long said.

In this way, the simplest acts of allyship contribute to a safe and equitable school environment for all students as LGBTQ+ issues continue to impact the student body today.

"I think that, especially as we talk about these issues, more and more people are coming out of the closet. And so, knowing how to be a good friend, how to be supportive and accepting is really important because that's something that everybody is going to experience at some point. And it also just creates a more inclusive community that in the end is going to benefit everybody," Wallach said.

Title IX

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district. And [that there is] better language [to include] that meets both California law and this [Title IX]. So we have guideposts that we use when we revise a policy," McNamara said.

In their process of adapting the sexual discrimination and harassment policies to the new Title IX regulations, the Board already revised a specific draft of their Maintaining Appropriate Adult-Student Interactions Policy during a Governing Board meeting on Dec. 9, 2020. Additionally, the Board restructured and edited their Sexual Harassment policy with several more adjustments during their meeting in Jan.

"So some of [the policies] have been reordered. And then what you'll see is like they added things like contractors, people are on your campus…[to fall under the sexual harassment policy], the school has to intervene [if they violate it]. You have to take action. The other thing is [that] people who are pregnant, [gave] childbirth or [have] medical conditions are added as protected under [the] sexual harassment [policy]," McNamara said.

While creating this new policy in their meeting on Jan. 13, the Governing Board reviewed a red-lined and edited version of their former policy to enact within the District, based on the aspects of the state and federal Title IX procedures the District will keep or adapt.

"You can see so there are just slight tweaks in the procedure, and how the District is dealing with the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator as they navigate the process. All of our site administrators and our HR department went through...eight [to] 12 hours of training to be trained on the new regulations, and how Title IX interfaces with California law. So both have to be incorporated in the state of California, to make sure that you know victims are protected, and…the new law changes things for the alleged perpetrator on that," Superintendent Dr. John Nickerson said.

The new Title IX regulations, however, had a significant impact on the confidentiality portion of the District's previous sexual harassment policy to follow the regulations' demands for due process for all parties involved in the case.

"[The changes take] out...the confidentiality piece...That is due largely to the Title IX change of if you're accused of sexual harassment, you have the right to know. So that is part of [why] we can't keep it secret...You have a duty to investigate as an administrator and you cannot keep it secret from the person that they're accusing," McNamara said.

Following further revisions of Title IX-related policies, the AUHSD plans to incorporate these changes into the following 2021-2022 school year in accordance with the mandatory state training schedule on sexual harassment.

"All [District staff] every two years has a mandatory training from the state on sexual harassment. So that will happen again, this [school year] was our off-year and we were working on policy this year," McNamara said. "So starting in the fall [of 2021] when students and teachers come back [in-person], these new changes will be incorporated. The Title IX changes I'm sure will be part of the stage training on sexual harassment."

While they are federal law, the Title IX revisions allow room for schools and local governments to implement their own sexual assault policies, as long as it does not directly contradict those stated in Title IX.

"It's important for us to be in compliance with the law, of course, and I think any discrepancy would be that you know that the regulations are a floor, not a ceiling," Governing Board Clerk Kristin Connelly said.

Many believe that the Biden Administration will roll back the changes made to Title IX, but repealing the Trump Administration's policies could take up to three years, and conservative states will most likely retain DeVos's version of the policy.

"Don't think that Biden's going to be elected

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Students and Teachers Celebrate Black History Month

To spread celebrate Black history, the community planned events to highlight Black historical figures

Brendan Connelly, Griffin Ruebner, and Zach Snyder | Staff Writers

Since 1976, Black History Month has existed as a dedicated time to spotlight and celebrate the achievements of African Americans. Beginning in February, the Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee (DEI), the Acalanes Parents Club (APC), and the Black Student Union (BSU) came together to brainstorm ways to honor the Black community.

On Feb. 1, a lesson on prominent Black historical figures was held during Monday's cohort meeting, with additional teachings held during the Monday cohort on Feb. 22, aiming to enrich student understandings of Black influence and importance.

"A positive take away from cohort meetings during Black History Month was learning about lots of black individuals who made an impact on the future, and diving into the importance of these people and what they accomplished. I think it is necessary to recognize these Americans for what they did and how they improved life for so many others," sophomore Drew Powell said.

In efforts to further increase local support for Black History Month, groups of Acalanes students decorated posters of prominent and historical Black faces on the school's fence along Pleasant Hill Road for those driving by to observe and learn from.

"If you look at the posters there are individuals from all sorts of backgrounds. Music, sports, politics, et cetera. Our parents committee wanted to help make that happen," DEI committee co-chair Rupy Krishnan said. "The purpose is to inform and educate the Acalanes student community, the parent community, and people who just drive by, just to give them a little nugget of information."

Many students expressed their support for the signs as a way to bring attention to the importance of Black History Month.

"These events have to be recognized, and I think large posters and banners on a main road

Blueprint Graphic/Arlyne Noguera

are a way to bring attention to it," freshman Zoya Acuña said. "I think it is really important for people at our school, but also in our community to recognize the importance of events like Black History Month, and these posters are a way to do this."

With the impactful contributions of many Black people falling under the radar, senior and Acalanes BSU President Deja Cooper emphasized the importance of learning not just about the most famous Black historical figures.

"Though Black history and excellence should be learned and celebrated year round, I think it is [also] important to note ALL black figures," Cooper said.

Every day, a new Black person of influence is highlighted on the dashboard of Canvas to celebrate 28 days of Black excellence.

"The purpose of the daily profiles is to help deepen and broaden, if only slightly, our recognition and awareness of Black America, to celebrate Black Excellence rather than just Black suffering and strife, [and] to try to see a tiny bit better that black history is U.S. history," science teacher and Acalanes' BSU advisor Jada Paniagua said.

Each of the four schools in the Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) is responsible for creating seven of the 28 profiles that will be broadcasted district-wide. Paniagua chose who to feature and created all seven profiles for Acalanes.

"So far, we have slides made for Wangari Maathai, Langston Hughes, and Isra Hirsi. The rest will be coming soon," Paniagua said.

Similarly, Acalanes Spanish teacher, Elizabeth Gough, educated her students every day in February about various Black Latinx individuals and their accomplishments. She created a 28 slide presentation to share a new historical figure each day during the month.

"For about five years, I showed a panorama of photos of Black Latinos on my door for Black History Month but I didn't really do much with it… Someone suggested that it would be helpful for teachers in all disciplines to review what they do for Black History Month and make it a point to discuss black leaders in their content area," Gough said. "I realized that I hadn't really done that. So two years ago, I investigated a bit more and came up with a more comprehensive list of famous Black Latinos."

Earlier this month, Acalanes held a book club for parents to discuss the book Between the World & Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates. Coates writes the book as a letter from the author to their teenage son discussing the realities of being a black man in America.

"I think it made space for people to reflect on experiences. I think it made space to reflect, and share, and talk about race, and for people to be exposed to something that many of us don't think about at all. Just to have a conversation in a safe space" DEI co-chair Natasha Kapoor-Acuña said.

Parents took the time to reflect and engage in discussions that ended in a broader understanding of the book's nuances and subtleties for everyone.

"Our discussion group homed in on this title a little… and it hit me hard. Between The World and Me. Suddenly that divide seemed so clear. The author, and by extension of his experience, millions of people, feel a great division from the world as I know it. I don't feel this way, and yet I didn't even grow up here. Ta-Nehisi Coates lives in a very different America as a result of deep-seated racism that has been carefully crafted for hundreds of years," book club participant and parent Lulu Braunstein said.

Additionally, throughout this past month, leadership hosted a variety of lunchtime activities for students and staff to participate in. These events consisted of Kahoots and trivia games to educate the Acalanes community.

"We focused on highlighting Black excellence as well as acknowledging the traumatic events in Black history that American school systems fail to teach," sophomore Hailey Stripling said.

These events, while entertaining and fun, pro-

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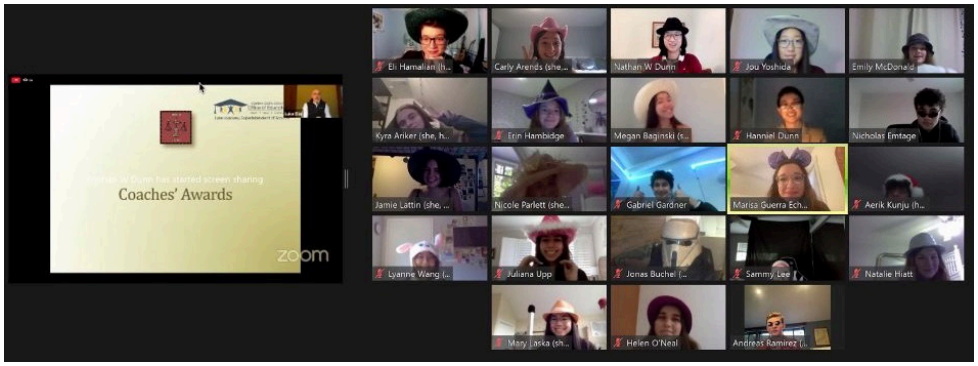
Mock Trial Wins Second Place at Contra Costa County Competition

After months of hard work, the mock trial team concludes their season

Shrida Pandey | Online News Editor



Courtesy Photo/Carly Arends

Keeping with tradition, the Acalanes Mock Trial team dons strange hats at an awards ceremony

After months of flipping through their case packets, sifting through evidence, and interviewing witnesses, the Acalanes High School Mock Trial team is finally bringing home a hard-earned trophy.

The Acalanes High School Mock Trial team finished a successful 2020-21 season, placing second in the Contra Costa County High School Mock Trial Championships on Feb. 16.

Going into the season, the team faced some difficulties due to losing strong team members from the class of 2020.

"I'm incredibly proud of how much the team accomplished. We started out this year with only three returning students who had any competitive trial experience from last year and we were hoping to make the playoffs and we did more than that," Mock Trial Coach and social studies teacher Joseph Schottland said.

The COVID-19 pandemic also impacted the team, making both the County competition and most practices virtual.

"[Due to COVID-19,] we moved online, and [although] it has been relatively smooth, competing over Zoom is different and we had to adapt, which we did," sophomore and witness Nathan Dunn said.

To prepare for competition and train newcomers, the team started working with Acalanes history teacher and head coach Joseph Schottland, retired judge Harlan Grossman, and attorney Michael Carter beginning in September, practicing biweekly every Thursday and Sunday. During these sessions, students split into different teams: prosecution, defense, and pretrial, and worked on their individual case parts.

Many members of the team thought the constant practices from the beginning of the school year enhanced their skills.

"We have improved our communication as a group and have built a sense of team unity. We've also improved in our online Zoom presentation, presence, and overall grown a lot [since the start of the season]," Dunn said.

Leading up to the County competition, the team also competed in six scrimmages, allowing them to go up against rivals like Campolindo High School and Alhambra High School. Although the team faced difficult competition, they ultimately won all of their matches.

For many members of the team, the scrimmages served as a learning experience.

"The week before the competition started we went against [two strong teams] and we got smacked around a little bit and at that point, we saw...what we need to strive to emulate and that helped us lock in and go a little bit harder right before the competition," Baginski said.

The team began County competition on Jan. 26, competing in four preliminary rounds over a two-week period, winning all matches but one against California High School. As a result, Acalanes entered the 2021 championship bracket as the third seed.

After beating Deer Valley High School in the quarterfinals on Feb. 9 and Hercules High School in the semifinals on Feb. 11, the team remet California High School in the County finals.

"We have a long history with [California] High. Last year [during the 2019 County championships], it was the exact same setup, it was the Acalanes defense against the [California] High prosecution in the finals, and we lost that match by a very small margin...we [were] very eager to hopefully get some revenge," Baginski said.

Although the team gave a valiant effort towards defeating the Condors, they ultimately lost again, receiving second place overall in the County.

In spite of disappointment from their final loss, many members of the team were proud of their hard work.

"[I feel happy that] we came in second place [because] I don't think any of the more experienced team members were expecting [it] considering a lot of our team is newer this year," defense attorney and junior Kyra Ariker said.

Members of the team attributed their season's success to their captains and lead attorneys Jamie Lattin and Baginski.

"A lot of the team consisted of underclassmen so I think the captains did a really good job teaching everyone what they knew. It definitely worked considering we made it to the finals," bailiff and junior Aerik Kunju said.

The team looks forward to another successful season next year, with the hope of getting payback in the 2022 County competition.

"This year's winner has nine current seniors on their team that are graduating which is a huge amount so I'm excited to face them [again] next year. I'm also excited to see what the [Acalanes] team [will] look like," Ariker said.

Title IX

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and it's all magically going to go back to the way it was. It won't. It may change slightly and we update board policy all the time as we get federal advisories, but I don't know that it's going to change that dramatically," McNamara said.

Due to the permanence of the Trump Administration's and DeVos' Title IX regulations, the District fears that the more time-consuming investigations will ward off student survivors from coming forward.

"And my fear is that students seeing how tough this process is might say like, 'No, I don't want to go through this. I don't want to face the person who did this to me, or I don't want to have this really long process and it can take up to 120 days to do an investigation,'" McNamara said.

SHRIDA'S SYSTEMS

Next Year's Course Request System

Admin and Counselors Begin to Finalize Courses for the 2021-2022 school year.

Shrida Pandey | Online News Editor

With three different languages, over 20 Advanced Placement and Honors courses, and many creative elective courses, Acalanes students have a wide variety of classes for student selection.

As the end of the school year slowly approaches, students and administration begin the process of selecting courses for the 2021-2022 school year.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, Acalanes administrations altered this process for 2021-2022 course selection for both students and staff. Instead of filling out paper sheets with their class selection and attending a mandatory meeting with their counselors, students selected their classes through the online student information portal Aeries, with help from a school offered virtual webinar.

"This year, course selection is different because we are online, which makes the process super tough. In the past, counselors met with students individually for three to five minutes to talk about course selection. It is hard right now because that is not possible since we are not open in person," Counselor Marissa Meadows said.

Many students complimented the efficiency of the new process.

"The new way to select courses was a good idea because I already knew what I wanted to take and didn't need to meet with my counselors and skip valuable time from an [Advanced Placement] class. I think if students already know what classes they want to take, this new way of doing it was good," junior Caroline Crossland said.

Other students, however, thought the process needed more clarification.

"I think the way of doing it this year was confusing compared to last year. I think meeting one on one in-person with counselors would have been really helpful, especially because I don't know what classes I want to take," junior Stella Bobrowsky said.

Students were not the only people facing changes in this year's course selection. The administration also decided that teachers could not host any informational sessions about their classes as they did in past years.

Instead, teachers filmed videos about their classes for a virtual "Open House" on Feb. 11 for students and parents to watch. Many students relied on these recordings to decide on what courses to take.

"I looked over the videos teachers made for classes for next year during [Open House] because I wasn't sure what classes I was going to take next year. I wanted to know about course workload and other things and the teachers giving information about the classes was really beneficial," junior Tessa Chan said.

In addition, the administration dedicated a Monday Cohort for teachers to answer student questions regarding course selection and to assist students with Aeries.

Students had until Friday, Feb. 19 to submit their proposed schedules. Once the deadline passed, the school placed students who did not fill out their schedules into classes based on graduation requirements and course availability.

The administration will work together to decide on what periods to offer classes and how to optimize course availability for students. During this time, they will also decide on whether Acalanes will offer classes with low signups.

After they finalize classes, the administration will assign teachers to courses. Then, a computer system randomly sorts students into schedules. Once the computer finishes student schedules, counselors will then adjust students' schedules and balance class sizes as needed.

"The Master Schedule is a huge Rubix cube, but more confusing, at least in my experience. Which classes to run is an admin decision and a complex puzzle considering student requests and staffing availability as well as trying to place classes in periods so that the ones only offered once a day don't conflict with each other," Meadows said.

Still, Meadows encouraged students to reach out if they had any questions,

"Counselors are here to [provide support through] helping students review their course selection choices, review what is needed for high school graduation, consult about which classes to take based on previous classes taken, [and even to] commiserate about how tough distance learning has been," Meadows said.

Blueprint Graphic/Lizzy Xie

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BP

Closed Campus: Open House

Teachers make the most of the first ever virtual Open House

Juliet Becker and August Walker | Staff Writers

As one of the few times during the school year when parents come onto campus, Acalanes Open House allows students and parents to walk the halls and learn more about classes available to students. However, due to the ongoing pandemic, social distancing restrictions forced Open House to shift to an online environment this year.

Serving annually as an opportunity for students to explore different classes, teachers show off the work of their students and give presentations about their classes to spark students' interest. However, this year, many teachers recorded videos of themselves talking about their classes instead.

One of the most attractive features of Open House is the Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) presentation in the Performing Arts Center. Normally, VAPA teachers set up a colorful gallery displaying student artwork, encouraging incoming freshman and current students to enroll in VAPA courses.

Without the typical exhibit, however, teachers are concerned about students' interest in their classes next year.

"All of us, whether we're a visual or performing art advisor, have concerns about what our enrollment will be like next year," art teacher Robert Porter said. "It's really up to the students and their word of mouth to their peers, and hopefully there's enough interest there to keep programs up and running."

Some teachers do not share the same concerns about virtual Open House. Instrumental Music Director Lauren Gibson believes that, with videos for students to watch, they will have more opportunities to explore different classes.

"In the normal format, you can only go to so many rooms in an evening, but now all the information is available at any time," Gibson said, "I also hope it will open up possibilities on electives that some students might not have considered."

Although VAPA is usually in the spotlight of Open House, choosing non-elective academic classes is also crucial. Teachers and the Administration strongly encouraged students and parents to watch some of the Open House videos to learn more about classes they plan on taking next year.

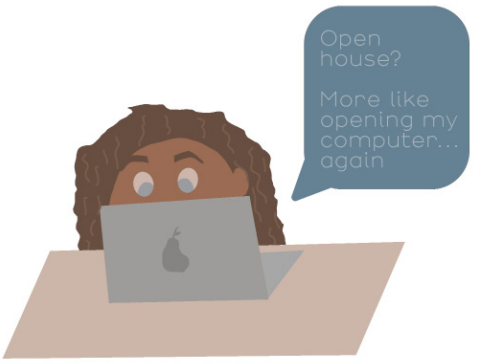
"Kids need to be informed about the classes they are taking, which is a little more difficult this year so maybe the event could be viewed as more important," Associate Principal Mike Plant said. "I think it's really important that kids watch the videos to inform their choices."

This year's Open House provided an opportunity for students to introduce themselves to their class options and to get to know the teachers supervising each class a little bit. However, with a growing uncertainty of what the next school year will look like, some students are questioning whether or not to sign up for advanced classes in fear of having to take them in a hybrid or distance learning environment.

"I can say in general, most elective teachers are very concerned about the prospects of their declining enrollment in their courses due to lack of student interest in taking an elective class during distance learning," Porter said.

Although many miss the opportunity to walk around campus and drop into various classrooms, not everyone sees the new online format as an entirely negative change. For some, having a virtual Open House provided benefits that were not available in a typical year.

"If anything, it could affect in a positive way



Blueprint Graphic/Anna Yiannikos

in that it would sort of open up possibilities. If a student or their family is not able to attend Open House, then there's a video presentation they would be able to access any time. So, it could actually be helpful," English teacher Will Benham-Baker said.

Although Open House is not taking its typical shape this year, teachers encourage students to gather as much information as possible in the videos.

"I think it's really important that kids watch the videos to inform their choices, particularly learning about and investigating the elective options," Plant said.

Black History Month

Continued from 4

vided a chance for students to learn and relearn about historic figures and events that get left out of the Acalanes curriculum. The activities served as a method to spread the true history of America to those who were interested in broadening their knowledge.

"After attending these activities, we hope the participants realize that there is so much more to learn," Stripling said. "When creating and hosting these games, I personally felt disappointed in how little I knew about American History. Black history should not be limited to the shortest month of the year, but incorporated into our everyday lives."

A discussion with author, rower, and motivational speaker Arshay Cooper culminated the majority of Black History Month events on Feb. 23. Cooper is the author of the novel and film A Most Beautiful Thing. The Parents Club and the Acalanes student body both sponsored this event, led by members of the DEI and student leaders.

"I hope that people walk away and say, 'well, I heard Arshay's call to action, and I heard what Arshay shared, so what is my own personal call to action?'" Walton said.

For more information on the event, visit acalanesblueprint.com.

On Feb. 25, Acalanes hosted a poetry night where students read poetry inspired by Black History Month, recited works from black poets, and more. Two local black-owned restaurants, Rêve Bistro in Lafayette and Firehouse Grill in Martinez, offered a special deal on meals that Acalanes families could purchase to enjoy during the event.

"The BSU and I have had a lot of help with the planning and logistics of all our upcoming and past activities. When it came to running the poetry night, I felt the exact same way: showered with support from our DEI committee," Cooper said.

The Acalanes community came together over the past month in support of Black History to support one another and learn about the incredible importance of African Americans to our country.

"While we have all of these events planned in the month of February, that doesn't mean we won't still strive for the education and celebration of Black history and excellence [the rest of the year]," Cooper said.

News Briefs

Liam McGlynn | News Editor

Former President Trump Acquitted in Impeachment Trial

Following five days of arguments from the House Impeachment Managers and President Trump's legal team, the Senate acquitted Former President Trump in his second impeachment Trial on Feb. 13.

In response to the violent insurrection at the Capitol on Jan. 6, Representatives David Cicilline, Jamie Raskin, and Ted Lieu introduced an article of impeachment on Jan. 11 charging Trump with "incitement of insurrection" for his remarks earlier that day at the Ellipse in Washington D.C. and his attempts to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election. Two days later, the House impeached Trump with a vote of 232-197.

With many Republican senators questioning the constitutionality of holding an impeachment trial against a former president, the Senate voted on a motion to dismiss the impeachment charges on Jan. 26. Although many Republicans considered trying a former president unconstitutional, the motion was struck down by 12 votes.

Led by Representative Raskin of Maryland, the impeachment managers began presenting their case against Former President Trump on Feb. 10 by presenting a detailed account of the events of Jan. 6.

Two days later, a member of Trump's counsel Bruce Castor presented his opening arguments claiming that the trial itself was unconstitutional and that the former president urged his supporters to protest peacefully.

Needing a two-thirds majority to convict, Trump was acquitted of all charges on Feb. 13 by a vote of 57-43.

Contra Costa County Begins to Vaccinate Teachers

After a slow start, California's vaccination program experienced a massive surge in vaccination rates. In Contra Costa County alone, roughly 21 percent of its population over the age of 16 have already received a vaccine. However, as schools in the county look to reopen, most teachers in Contra Costa have yet to get vaccinated.

In response, Contra Costa Health Services announced on Feb. 18 that frontline essential workers, including teachers, can now sign up to get a vaccine.

With the Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) planning to reopen schools in mid-March with a hybrid-learning model, many teachers across the district are looking to get vaccinated as soon as possible so they can get the second dose before returning to in-person learning.

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Another Beautiful Day: The Life and Legacy of Chris Huber

The Lamorinda community mourns the loss and celebrates the life of beloved P.E. teacher Chris Huber after his 20 year battle with Parkinson's

Zach Snyder, Brendan Connelly, Anastasia Grits, Aaron Vaserman, Daniel Adri, and Sammy Lee | Staff Writers

Every community needs a kind mentor, leader, and friend. Indeed, an optimistic and positive role model leaves a powerful impact on any community. Chris Huber was that role model for the Acalanes community: a teacher beloved by everyone around him, a mentor to all his students, and a loving person.

Chris Huber, a teacher, colleague, friend, father, and mentor, passed away due to Parkinson's disease on Jan. 21 after teaching in the Bay Area for near to 40 years.

Huber was born one of four children, on Aug. 6th, 1954, in Fort Bragg, California to Matthew and Maria Huber. His mother is still alive and is turning 99 years old in May.

Huber attended Fort Bragg High School as the Class of 1972, and upon graduation, he attended the Redwoods College from 1972-74. Huber balanced academics with athletics, playing basketball at the junior college level. Once he finished junior college, Huber received a scholarship to play basketball at Humboldt State University, where he studied mathematics and physical education (PE).

Graduating with his teaching degree, Huber began his storied career in coaching and education at Salesian High School in 1980 where he taught math and PE.

In 1983, Huber married his wife, Peg. Mary Margret Kelly (Peg) was born February 2, 1954 in Marion, OH. She was the second daughter in a family of four girls and attended Marian Catholic High School. Peg went to Bowling Green State University on a swimming scholarship and received a degree in education. In 1978 Peg and Chris met while Peg was traveling to Eureka where she planned to work. In just a few weeks they had become best friends.

Two years later, they moved to the Bay Area and were married soon after in 1983. Peg worked in the hotel and hospitality industry for nearly 20 years but that job was always second to her family. Together Chris and Peg had three children- Dana, Maureen (Mo), and Kevin. In 1994, Chris and Peg bought a cabin in Clear Lake where they spent countless days enjoying the outdoors and creating lifelong relationships with their neighbors. In 2014, Peg Kelly passed away.

Two years after they married, Huber began teaching at El Cerrito High School until 2002, when he transferred to Acalanes High School. The Home of the Dons became Huber's second home until his passing.

"His love for his job, he never actually called it a job. It was so much fun to him, just like this passion he had for being around the kids and from what I hear, their relationship with him," Huber's daughter Mo Pederson said.

He fully embraced his role as a PE teacher. Huber often started every class with dynamic warmups and two laps around the football field.

"Every day he would add on another push-up, another sit-up, and he would walk around, and then he would say positive things. He was very energetic, and it made everyone else energetic and positive, too. Even though he had high expectations, he was there to push you and root for you.

He would walk around the rows and be like 'Hey you're doing a good job! You can do it! Go closer to the ground!'" sophomore Abby Drake said.

Every morning, when many students were only half awake, Huber came to class full of energy and ready for the day ahead. He consistently spread this positive mindset and energy to his students.

"I sat at the end of the line when we stretched and Mr. Huber would stand by me most days and he'd sometimes ask how I was doing and that always cheered me up and made me a little more motivated," sophomore Ava Lorenz said.

Huber strived to motivate his students during class and make PE more enjoyable. Many students attest to his supportive attitude and note how much of a difference it made.

"He was always super positive, super friendly, always in a good mood and I think it really made everyone around him the same way. He was always super active, and I mean it was way early in the morning and he was running around, super positive, so awake, so alive it was kind of amazing," Drake said. "He was so enthusiastic about table tennis, and he made sure that everyone was participating. He seemed super happy teaching his students, just being around us and I guess just having a great time playing with us."

Following the dynamic warmups, Huber led the class activity for the day. While students played, he walked around and engaged with them, giving tips and joking around.

"His class was one of the most enjoyable experiences my freshman year. I will always remember playing pickleball and missing the ball, and he would come over, nudge me, then tell me that I sucked. It was very funny and always brought my mood up when he goofed off with us, almost like he was a student too," sophomore Tyler Worthington said.

Huber always held very high expectations for his students and their achievements brightened his mood. Instead of just exercising in his class, Huber also wanted to push all students to become better athletes.

"He would always want me to go to my limits and push past them. If I had expected to do 20 push-ups, [Huber] wanted 21. He kept on upping the standard and that not only made it easier to pay close attention to detail, but to push beyond your limits and succeed past the others," Worthington said.

Huber held high expectations for himself as well. He played students in table-tennis, putting effort into and championing every game. Sometimes, when students weren't doing as well as others in a warm-up, he tried to help them improve. He took his high expectations and encouraged students to embrace the same mindset.

However, during class performance evaluations, Huber also eased the stress of students and wanted to watch them succeed.

"Whenever we were doing some kind of test he would always give words of wisdom. To me at least, he would tell stories of other students that he had and how they would push through the challenge," sophomore Liam Stancik said.

As his daughter said, Huber's ability to mix fun with work made class enjoyable for many students. He taught his classes with a playful and light tone and used humor to encourage students to pay attention.

"Mr. Huber loved to joke around with students during class and was really funny. He always made jokes about students if they were slacking off during class that would make the whole class laugh," sophomore Sarah McCarthy said.

Students loved Huber, and it was obvious this love was mutual. He was always smiling and trying to make his students' day a little better, whether it was in or outside of the gym.

"His smile was infectious, and he would always respond to you when you said hi to him no matter where you were, he would turn around and look everywhere just to find out where that came from and he would say hi back or smile. It really made Acalanes a brighter place," sophomore Juan Ruiz-Sagrero said.

Not only did Huber uplift spirits in his PE classes, but he also hugely impacted the basketball

players he coached. As a PE teacher, high school sports played a big role in his life. He didn't just participate in sports, but instead he also embraced his love for sports and shared it with everyone around him.

"No matter where he was I would seek him out first and yell 'HUBER!!!' then proceed to give him a big hug and handshake. His smile and positivity was just so infectious that I always felt the need to grab a piece of it to pass on to my players as a token of good vibes," Acalanes basketball coach James Williams said.

Huber's role as a basketball coach went beyond solely motivating the players. He was an excellent athlete in college and continued to improve his athleticism as he got older. He spread this clear mindset of improvement to his players.

"As a coach, Mr. Huber was all about the fine details. Constantly reminding the players to 'take a picture' under the rim when going for a layup. He also helped me improve my free throw game, which allowed me to consistently beat my players in challenges throughout the season," Williams said.

Throughout the years, Huber created connections with countless people. Not only did he share his vast insight and knowledge of the game, but he also always wanted to support others.

Huber became a coach at Acalanes for the men's Varsity Basketball Team, and even while he was an assistant coach, the other coaches collectively saw him as a mentor for themselves and the team.

"When I first met Huber, I had heard of his championship pedigree, so at first, I was a bit intimidated. Soon after, I realized I had nothing to worry about. Huber has no ego. He welcomed me with that big traditional Huber-pull-you-in-handshake-hug that he is known for," Varsity Head Coach Sol Henik said. "We exchanged stories about hoops and common friends and our friendship grew from there. On and off the court, he was present with me, our team, staff, and my family."

Even while off the job, Huber dedicated his time with complete selflessness, hoping to help anyone in any way. He often set aside time to talk or participate with his students and colleagues to create any positive change he could.

"He wanted to be there with them as a passenger whether they were celebrating a great success or dealing with a failure," PE teacher and Football Coach Mike Ivankavich said. "I guess he influenced me in many ways, but the most important was that he was willing to share his hope and positivity with me during the times I needed them most."

Not only did Huber give his time to coach after school, but during school hours he provided people the opportunity to learn from him on forming meaningful connections with his students. His welcoming and selfless personality created an environment that students found comforting.

"I just recall how ecstatic he was when I first requested to shadow him. He would always greet me with the biggest handshake, hug, and 'Hey Bud!'. His passion inspired me to want to be part of this school beyond just coaching and it was through him that I was given that very opportunity. I am forever grateful for his guidance and genuine care," Williams said.

Many people say that Huber gave great advice to people because he deeply cared for them. The Dons community associated him with his "Huber-isms" that all exuberated a very genuine feeling that he truly cared for the well being of others. Arguably his most well-known "Huber-isms" was his signature wave and smile.

"There are many things that Huber valued that I will carry forward… The importance of touch, especially when creating connections with one another or through physical competition is extremely essential," Henik said. "Huber mastered this through his aforementioned greetings and during games and practices with his plethora of high-fives, pats-on-the-back, fist-bumps or just the lean in. These connections through seemingly inconsequential touches were actually essential in creating meaningful caring relationships."

Huber provided a unique approach to the PE

department. Huber put his all in shaping the program and establishing an engaging yet demanding curriculum. By creating a community within the department he brought together all the teachers, and gave others PE teachers the privilege to learn from his guidance.

"Mr. Huber was a part of the PE department when I first started at Acalanes. While I wasn't new to working at a high school as an athletic trainer, this was the first time I was teaching," PE Department Chair and Head Athletic Trainer Chris Clark said. "Mr. Huber showed me the ropes and welcomed me to that little piece of the campus. I have been at Acalanes for 17 years and Mr. Huber has been a part of every one of them. I eventually moved into the PE department as a PE instructor and had the honor to watch and learn from such an incredible PE educator and coach."

Huber changed the dynamic of the Acalanes community. From establishing a cohesive PE curriculum to being the friendliest, most welcoming face on campus, Huber left his mark on Acalanes. It wasn't his school spirit or his grand ability to teach, it was purely his compassion and love for what he did.

"He was a really good, principled guy. When I left Acalanes, I went to be an Assistant Principal at another school. I remember wanting to come back here because there was a great culture," science Teacher Peter Stewart said. "There is a great culture of teachers here. He's one of the guys I think I wanna be like. When you talk to him he makes you feel great. I think that that bleeds out to the culture of the school and it really influences the school."

The lessons he taught to his PE classes and his basketball teams transferred to advice for the future. He never missed a moment to improve a student's day or give them a tip and undoubtedly, students loved his advice. When Huber shared his stories with his daughter, he said, "they pay me to play."

"He totally enjoyed this job and building the relationships with the kids and maintaining the relationships with the kids," Pederson said. "I know, it may not be the actual subject teaching, but he would meet kids for morning workouts at 6am. He's told me a lot about the work he would do outside of teaching too like the open gyms at lunchtime where he would enjoy messing around on the ping pong table. He certainly loved teaching. Everything he did was for bettering his students."

Huber's presence not only impacted students, but he helped teachers and fellow staff members through the positive environment Huber always created. Huber engaged in heartfelt conversations, offering advice about raising children, families, and marriage. He never shied away from a difficult conversation and provided his motivational and compassionate knowledge.

"I think what I will truly miss the most are our conversations every morning in the coaches' office before school," Clark said. "The content was never all that important, but there was always a laugh, always a measured perspective on something going on in our lives, the world, whatever…. And his hugs. I'm a big guy but Mr. Huber always managed to give me a memorable squeeze whenever the moment warranted one of his hugs."

Huber lived a brilliant life and touched the lives of everyone around him. Huber led an amazing life that will be remembered as a legacy to all of Acalanes.

"If we had a memorial service right now, I don't know that there would be a facility that could house it with all the people that he touched over the many years players, coaches, students, staff members, faculty members," Athletic Director and Mathematics Teacher Randall Takahashi said. "You'd probably have to get Oracle just to get everybody in there that would want to be there. And it's just truly amazing that he has such a positive impact on everybody."

Thank you to the Huber family for sharing their stories with Blueprint.

Antisemitism: Unveiling the Hatred that Never Ended

A look into modern day religious oppression

Lyanne Wang, Zach Snyder, and Irene Meklin | Staff Writers

The swastika: a symbol many people have seen, yet many people are blind to its history. Whether it's etched beneath a desk or carved into a pole in the hallways, the small symbol serves as a reminder that antisemitism is not a thing of the past; it exists around us all.

Following the mass antisemitic display at the Capitol storming on Jan. 6, the Acalanes community reflected on the pressing issue of national and local religious hostility towards Jews.

The recent spectacle of Capitol rioters sporting "Camp Auschwitz" t-shirts blazed across social media platforms, bringing antisemitism to the forefront of American media. However, in responding to the growing recognition of antisemitism today, some people note that discrimination against Jews is anything but new.

"Antisemitism has been in the United States since its inception, and in Europe and other parts of the world thousands of years before that," history teacher Joseph Schottland said. "It has to do with hatred of the outsider or those who are different, and people's willingness to believe conspiracy theories. Some of the world's first and longest-lasting conspiracy theories have involved Jews."

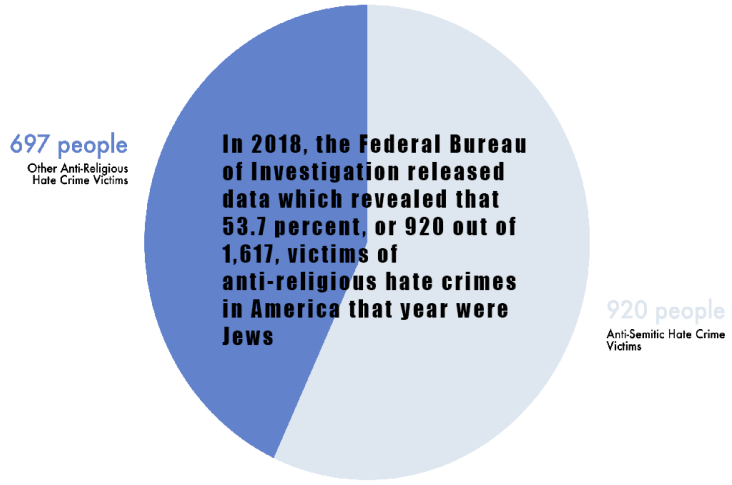
From the denial of citizenship and confinement to ghettos in the Middle Ages to the attacks on synagogues in Pittsburgh and San Diego in the last three years, some historians now regard antisemitism as "history's oldest hatred." Despite its presence all throughout history, people today often associate antisemitism with just a single event: the Holocaust. The indefensible genocide between 1941 and 1945, in which antisemitic leader Adolf Hitler prompted Nazi Germany and its collaborators to murder six million Jewish men, women, and children, is unavoidably conspicuous in the conversation of antisemitism.

"What I first think of when I hear the word antisemitism is the Holocaust. I think that it's one of the first things that comes to mind because [it] was a horrific event in history, and it didn't happen very long ago," sophomore Sophie Westen said.

While knowing about the Holocaust is a significant step in acknowledging the injustice Jews face, the mass awareness and extremity of this particular event can overshadow
other forms of antisemitism. Studying the Holocaust alone may create a narrow-minded approach to the vast topic of anti-Jewish experience, promoting a false impression that antisemitic behavior ended with World War II.

"I feel like antisemitism is often thought of as a thing of the past. In my history classes, I learned about the Holocaust, but that is the extent of what was taught regarding antisemitism," Westen said. "I was not taught about how it is still a huge problem today, and I did not learn about other large movements of antisemitism before the Holocaust."

The idea that antisemitism exists only within history books is misleading, as Jews today experience targeted violence at a level higher than all other religious groups. In 2018, the Federal Bureau of Investigation released data which revealed that 53.7 percent, or 920 out of 1,617, victims of anti-religious hate crimes in America that year were Jews. Several Jewish students feel that, despite its evident presence today, the issue of antisemitism does not receive sufficient attention.


697 people
Other Anti-Religious Hate Crime Victims
In 2018, the Federal Bureau of Investigation released data which revealed that 53.7 percent, or 920 out of 1,617, victims of anti-religious hate crimes in America that year were Jews
920 people
Anti-Semitic Hate Crime Victims

Blueprint Graphic / Seth Kline

"It's very obvious to me that antisemitism isn't getting coverage because if I look back on the Life Synagogue shooting, it got maybe two days of actual attention… What I see on social media about the issue of antisemitism is only Jewish people and maybe a couple of non-Jews posting about it, but it's not enough," freshman Gabe Gardner said.

The Life Synagogue shooting in Pittsburgh was the deadliest attack on the Jewish community in American history. On Oct. 27, 2018, gunman Robert Bowers entered the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pa., and shot and killed 11 congregants. Despite its severity and national impact, students within the Lamorinda community mention that several schools failed to recognize the incident.

"This shooting in October of 2018 hit the Jewish community very hard. 11 people were murdered. Some of them were even Holocaust survivors, and no teachers at Stanley [Middle School] said a thing," sophomore Maya Paul said.

The attack in Pittsburgh was just one of several anti-Jewish incidents across America that barely caught the attention of schools. This lack of discussion and awareness on modern-day antisemitism perpetuates the belief that discrimination against Jews is not present locally. However, even though such extreme acts of hatred are not common in the Acalanes community, antisemitism often appears in other forms such as jokes, passing comments, or stereotypes about Jews.

"Many times, kids would call people Jews, which sounds idiotic, but true. They would quite literally use Jewish stereotypes against people, like me, by referencing my nose, greed, etc.," Gardner said. "Although they were joking, they really weren't. My most recent experience with antisemitism was in eighth grade with a kid who told me Hitler wasn't in the wrong."

The subtlety of microaggressions sometimes allows people to overlook them, but such remarks that range from insensitive comments to

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hate speech are issues that a vast majority of Jews deal with on a daily basis.

"[Antisemitism] is an issue for all Jews because I haven't met someone who is Jewish and has not had some kind of comment said to them… I think in our community, people don't really think that it is a real thing because they haven't been on the other side of people's words," Paul said.

Although comments and stereotypes cause no tangible harm, they voice vicious intentions and promote an unwelcoming environment for Jewish students.

"I have experienced antisemitism, and though [some of] it wasn't directly towards me, it still affected me and made me feel uncomfortable and nervous to be a Jewish girl in our community," Jewish Club president and sophomore Rachel Gottfried said.

Some Jewish students prefer to hide the fact they are Jewish to avoid facing accounts of antisemitism, or feeling out of place.

"Personally, I've seen people hide the fact [that] they are Jewish just for the sake of being comfortable and not feeling like the odd one out. Because of this, people are losing the sense of who they are and so much more… Of course no one reps [being Jewish] all day everyday, but people sometimes can literally be ashamed by it," Gardner said. "It's scary knowing that [when] I go to temple something bad could happen to me which has been seen in the news."

On Oct. 30, 2020, anti-Jewish sentiment within the Lamorinda community sparked recognition when an unknown perpatrator vandalized several homes in Lafayette with paintings of swastikas along with the word "Trump." The recent displays of antisemitic behavior both locally and across the country at the Capitol storming on Jan. 6 furthered fear among Jewish students.

"It's really scary to see people revert so much to past ways of thinking and acting, especially knowing what happened not even 100 years ago, but it's not unexpected. Acts of antisemitism have been constant throughout time and different leadership, but such a public display of hatred was definitely shocking nevertheless," Jewish Club secretary and junior Ava Spiegler said.

In looking for an explanation for the prevalence of antisemitism, some students say that the inability to spot discrimination against Jews based on physical atrributes undermines people's awareness of antisemitic behavior.

"I think there's a lot of antisemitic attitudes in our community, and I think it kind of gets glossed over because Jews typically have lighter skin, and it's less obvious to a lot of people because they think racism only involves the color of a person's skin," Jewish Club member and junior Franny Daughters said.

Many people also feel that a core factor of antisemitism lies in lack of education. Several students, both Jewish and non-Jewish, mention that AUHSD's history curriculums contain insufficient amounts of teachings on Jewish past, faith, and tradition.

"There isn't much education about the Jewish culture and people, and in general, the history of us as a people. When we talk about Judaism, it's not about the people, or really the culture. It's very diluted," Gardner said.

Furthermore, some people voice the necessity for history curriculums to include not only Jewish hardships, but also the accomplishments of Jews as a people.

"America's youth needs to be taught about antisemitism within school, meaning within the mandatory classroom curriculum, just as we now are talking about racism and talking about all the other forms of hate. [On the] flip side of that, we need to teach the beautiful things that Jewish people have brought to the world like ethics, culture, science, and justice," AUHSD Jewish Club leader and Rabbi Akiva Naiman said.

Members of the Acalanes Jewish Club, a club at Acalanes that offers a space for students to share personal experiences of antisemitism, emphasize that education is the first step in combating anti-Jewish sentiment.

"For starters, learning more about the Holocaust and why not only Hitler did what he did, but why so many people followed him, would be really beneficial to all… Education on the cause of the [Holocaust] and how feelings expanded to genocide would prevent a lot more hate crimes, or at least hatred," Spiegler said. "By educating students both on antisemitism as a whole and their peers' experiences, I'm hopeful that it will allow the community to become more socially conscious and put up a united front against antisemitism."

Although antisemitism remains a prevalent issue today, students are optimistic that the Acalanes community will acknowledge its presence to face it progressively.

"I encourage those who haven't been stepping up to do so because as much as we would like to think it, antisemitism is not a thing of the past, rather, it is so prevalent right now, even at home, that we need to unite against it," Spiegler said.

Students Focus on Investment Interests

Junior investors take advantage of fiscal opportunity in the stock market

Alex Ariker, Andrew Habas, and Connor Faust | Copy Editor and Staff Writers

Wall Street brings many things to mind; a high school student isn't usually one of them. Yet, as Redditors have recently shown, the little guy can have a big impact in the stock market. With groups like Robinhood and TD Ameritrade making trading more accessible to individuals, many high school students are taking advantage of the opportunity to make money.

Acalanes students use broker applications to invest in the stock market for both entertainment and profit. The stock market is a free and now mostly digital market where investors and traders can buy and sell securities at an agreed price. Securities are different types of financial investments, ranging from debt to parts of companies, or stocks. Real world events like earnings releases, management changes and variables like crowd psychology affect the prices of securities, either increasing or decreasing investment value.

Although historically suits at Wall Street drive most movements in the market, retail investing for both adults and students have become more popular with gamified brokerages, stimulus checks, and the abundance of time in quarantine to learn and invest.

A variety of reasons drive student investment, ranging from an enjoyment of playing the markets to monetary potential of investments.

"My goal right now isn't really to make a bunch of money. It's just to educate myself to maybe, in the future, put more money in and just save up to live more comfortably," junior and novice investor Ian Birmingham said.

Student market investment often starts with parental advice and involvement. Parents within the Lafayette community encourage many students to start early with long term investment.

"My dad said a few years ago 'Hey, do you want to invest?' And I was like, 'Well, okay, yeah, sure, why not?' So we got some money out of my bank account and we just put some money into my dad's company. Just [to] a feel for it," sophomore Jack Dunne said.

As student interest in the market becomes more common, new student investors use different methods to invest and trade. The two general ways of identifying investment or trade opportunities is through Fundamental and Technical Analysis. Fundamental Analysis takes into account statistics about a company and other general information to determine the value of a security. The latter focuses on predicting the price of a security by identifying patterns on charts. Students can use a single method or a combination of the two to predict which direction the price of a security will move.

"I reviewed their earnings last year, [Public Companies] has a PDF of their earnings. If it's trending upward, then you should probably buy it, but if they lose more money than they made, then that's a sign that it's not managed by good people, so then I probably shouldn't invest in it. My dad recommended penny stocks since they're low risk, kind of low reward," junior Akira Nannen said.

Despite the small impact of individual retail investors and students investors, traders at r/WallstreetBets popularized buying GameStop(GME) and AMC Entertainment(AMC), causing both of their prices to soar. The subreddit targeted investors who held short positions on GME, AMC and other similar stocks.

"[Short selling is when] you sell the stock high and then you hope to buy it back at a lower price. So a short seller is betting that the stock will go down," Managing Director at CITIBank Todd Bielawski said.

Stocks can increase infinitely in worth and the potential outcome for traders with short positions could be extreme losses. When traders hold losing short positions, securities that have increasing prices, many choose to exit their position by buying back the shorted shares, which drives up the price further while leaving the trader to cover the loss. By targeting highly shorted stocks like GME, masses of retail investors can buy into a stock, increasing the price initially and forcing holders of short positions to cover their positions. Many know this strategy as a short squeeze, which is what members of the subreddit did when they targeted stocks like GME, AMC, BlackBerry, and Tootsie Roll.

Although it is illegal for hedge funds to team up and short sell the same stock, it is not illegal when individual traders group together with the same end goal. People did not predict such a large group of individual traders could come together prior to the GME incident.

"Nobody ever considered that a platform like Reddit could get people to buy or sell a stock, and there's no collusion because you don't know any of the other people that are probably buying the stock," Bielawski said.

The GME short is unique to this day and age, with increased internet communication over anonymous forums and a recent increase of activity online as a result of the pandemic.

"Most of the securities rules were developed in the 1940," Bielawski said, "Obviously, nobody considered the internet then so the regulators and the laws are going to have to catch up to the new technologies and, you know, we'll see if that impacts the Reddit users and others in the future."

The rules and laws regarding trading and investing have not adapt-

Continued on 16

Blueprint Graphic / Freschtta Warres

Continued from 15

ed to the fast paced lifestyle of the 21st century. Young adults, like Acalanes students, are taking advantage of this failure, which is seen in the GME short squeeze organized through Reddit.

The popularity of the short squeeze surpassed Reddit in becoming a movement to "stick it to the man" with targets on many of the short positions held by institutional traders and hedge funds. This recent short squeeze gave a chance for retail investors to stand up against institutional traders. In their own protest against Wall Street and institutional traders, some students participated in the short squeeze.

"People were hyping up AMC to be [similar to GME]. So I was like, 'I might as well try putting some money into because I'm willing to risk my money,'" Birmingham said.

Opposite of the risky methods of r/WallstreetBets, many young investors prefer safe investments. For students interested in the market, early investment allows not only fiscal but educational opportunities. Provided with a passive income, students have an opportunity to save money for expenses like student payments or retirement funds. Student traders also get early financial experience that helps as a young adult when dealing with income and developing savings. This provides students with a stronger financial position as they approach adulthood.

"There's a lot of opportunity in the stock market and there always will be. I think that if you start early, there's more potential to make more. [My goal in investing is] to make money for a comfortable life. Really, that's all we can ask for," Nannen said.

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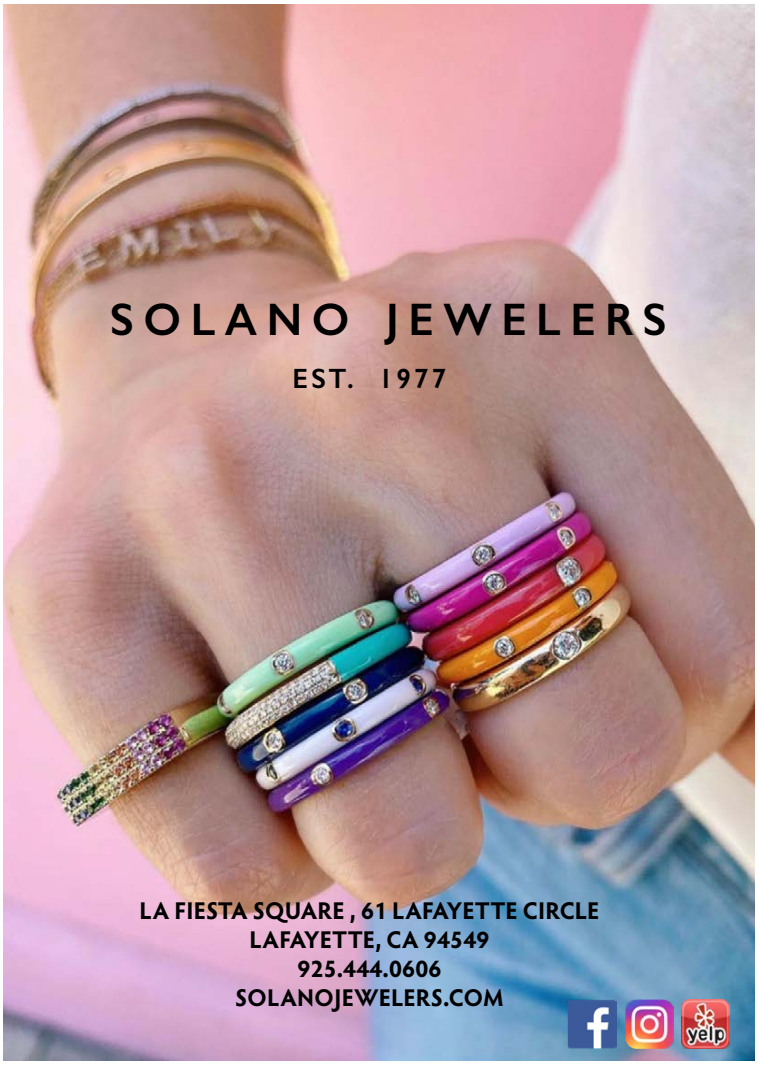


Vaccine Inequity Poses Challenges to Local and National Distributors

As more people are vaccinated, concerns develop regarding the correlation between vaccinations and wealth

Brendan Connelly, Mara Korzeniowska, Helen O'Neal, and Saylen Cardoni | Staff Writers

Across the country, communities rush to vaccinate their most at-risk citizens: the elderly and health-care workers. However, even locally, in the scramble to receive the coveted COVID-19 vaccine, some people cut the lines, leaving out those who are most vulnerable without the vaccine.

The United States distributed tens of millions of doses of the vaccine since the FDA first approved vaccines in early December. These numbers, however, pale in comparison to the need for the COVID-19 vaccine. This lack of distribution and scramble by Americans to receive the vaccine brings concerns about vaccine equity.

In an effort to fairly distribute the vaccine to those most in need, the state and federal government organized tiers to distribute the vaccine. The tiers are typically organized by age but health care workers also take priority. Nevertheless, there is still plenty of uncertainty and confusion regarding who will receive the vaccine.

"I think vaccine efforts were set up to encounter struggles, not successes. There aren't enough vaccines for everyone, and this is a serious virus. Humans can exhibit the most altruistic and heroic behaviors, but we are known to do what it takes in the face of perceived danger," nursing home doctor and Co-Chair of Antioch Medical Center's Ethics Committee Annita Mittal said.

People interested in receiving the vaccine must coordinate with multiple distributors. Contra Costa County (CCC) has many sites for distributing vaccinations. Locally, major healthcare providers like John Muir and Kaiser distribute the vaccine as well.

"I'm on three different sites where I am on a list and I'm waiting to hear from one of them," math teacher Barbara Mochizuki said.

This month, California also launched the MyTurn app, which helps people schedule an appointment for the vaccine, and notifies them when it's their turn to receive it.

"Leveraging California's innovation and technology assets, the state is officially launching MyTurn today, a new system for Californians to learn when they are eligible to be vaccinated, a place to make an appointment when eligible, and a mechanism to easily track vaccination data," a Jan. 26 press release from the State of California said.

Various people across the Lamorinda community successfully received the vaccine, specifically healthcare workers and those who are over 75 years of age.

"The Kaiser clinic where I received the first dose was very well organized, and the vaccine distribution went smoothly. We had to stay for 15 minutes after the jab to see if there were any serious reactions. The side effect I got was a bit of soreness around the area of the arm receiving the vaccine, which lasted just a few days." 82-year-old local Rossmoor resident Joanna Nock said.

However, many others had different experiences. If one is not a healthcare worker or above 75 years old, it is much more difficult for them to receive the vaccine.

"I do know other people who are my age and have no health risks who've managed to get it. Sometimes it's just luck. I had one friend who called me and said, 'You should try this site I got in', and then they changed it," Mochizuki said.

Blueprint Graphic / Mara Korzeniowska

Mochizuki has not received the vaccine yet, despite being a teacher over 65 with pre-existing conditions. Many without pre-existing conditions, however, received the vaccine, some not even in this age group.

Another concern is the strict age cutoff. Many teachers in the Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) are under 65, but only by a few years.

"A lot of the teachers at our schools may not be over 65 but a lot of them are over 55. And so I know people who are concerned," Mochizuki said.

Acalanes English Teacher, Cathy Challacombe, is in this category. She is not over 65 and therefore has not qualified for the vaccine.

"[My husband] was able to get vaccinated and he totally felt guilty about it. I don't want him to feel guilty about it. I have tried all sorts of ways to get a vaccine, and so far no good," Challacombe said.

Specific communities across the nation concerned people about vaccine equity. Locally, though, many anonymous volunteers filed complaints about the Stanley Middle School Clinic, a vaccine distribution location here in Lafayette. The County, however, recently shut it down for unknown reasons.

To combat any potential inequity locally, the Contra Costa County Public Health Ethics board and other similar boards work to manage concerns regarding vaccine equity.

"Ethics Committees in the health care setting serve three main functions: to educate staff, to do consultations when requested on ethical issues, and to review and create policies within a facility or organization so that practices are consistent, in keeping with the standards of care, and fair," Mittal said.

However, as concerns about vaccine inequity play out, people across the globe must work together to most effectively handle this worldwide pandemic.

"This has been a very unique journey, so extending kindness and some compassion every day even if you are short on it does make a big difference, especially right now," Mittal said.

Redefining Politics: The Rise of Conspiracy Theories

The origins of internet theory, QAnon, and its journey to Washington DC

Catherine Lomond, Ella Alpert, Marisa Guerra Echeverria, Juliet Becker | Feature Editor, Arts Editor, and Staff Writers

Q. The unsuspecting, seventeenth letter of the alphabet. What was previously an innocent symbol changed in November 2017, in which one small, cryptic post made on an anonymous message board exploded into a series of radical conspiracies, extremist acts, and violence that redefined American politics four years later.

With the internet's increasingly vast authority on all aspects of everyday life, people have more outlets to share and absorb information than ever before. However, with the beautiful diversity of ideas the internet provides, there comes the detrimental toll of misinformation and conspiracies.

One conservative internet conspiracy theory known as QAnon took the political world by storm. Some may argue that these claims are absurd, but with recent events like the 2020 election and Capitol storming on Jan. 6, it is clear how big an influence QAnon has on politics, whether it be in a small community or Washington, DC.

Starting in Nov. 2017 by an anonymous user under the name "Q Clearance Patriot", commonly called "Q", this entity claims the status of a high ranking government official with classified information. Posting on 4chan, an anonymous message board, Q claimed the American government is full of Satan-worshiping pedophiles. While attacking many Democrat government officials, Q claimed Donald Trump's presidency would bring justice and order.

Due to initial lack of proper evidence and exposure, few Americans came across any of these theories, and those who did generally rendered them baseless. However, with heightened political turmoil, factless ideology often worms its way into mainstream media like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube through algorithms which target people who interact with certain content.

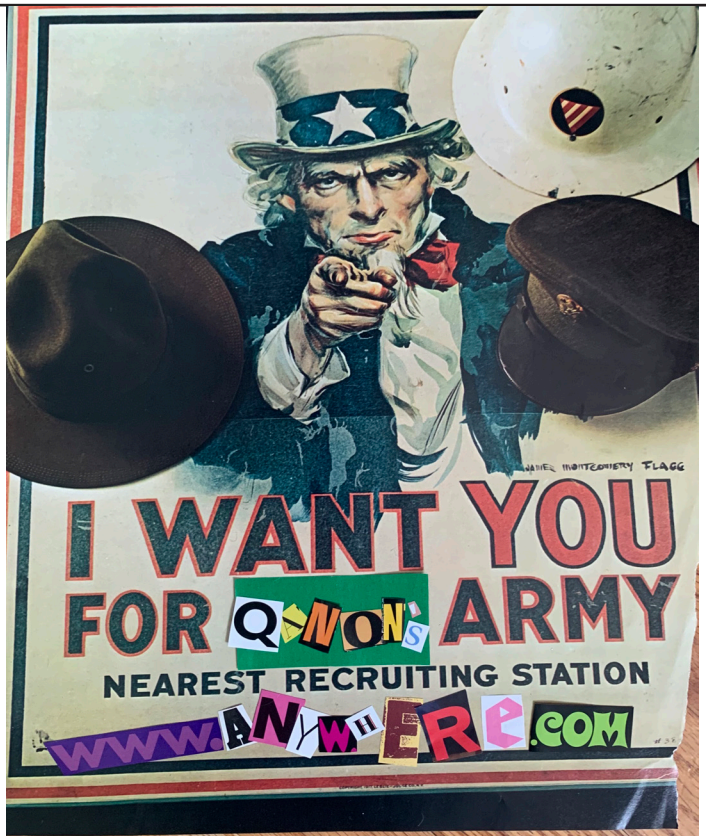
According to a December poll conducted by National Public Radio and Ipsos, 17 percent of Americans believe in QAnon's original theory.

Subsequently, following a surge in media popularity, the theory's influence expanded and evolved much like its growing fan base. QAnon supporters amplify Q's original post, that government officials are Satan-worshiping pedophiles, but the theories don't stop there.

Supporters believe that these Satan-worshiping pedophiles also run the media, corporations, and Hollywood. Supporters claim that the group includes the Obamas, Clintons, Bidens, Ellen Degeneres, Oprah Winfrey, Pope Francis, and the Dalai Lama.

As QAnon gained growing national recognition, more of their theories came to light. Specifically, the COVID-19 pandemic is a topic QAnon supporters spew baseless claims about, most of which raise concerns from many people.

Not only do QAnon supporters antagonize government officials, but they also have little regard for the medical and scientific community. For instance, they believe that the use of Miracle Mineral Supplement will prevent the spread of COVID-19. The U.S Food and Drug Administration, however, strongly warned against this due to its life-threatening side effects.



Blueprint Graphic / Ella Alpert

Most QAnon supporters are also anti-maskers, refusing to wear masks in public to protect others, regardless of advisory from the medical community. In the photos and videos of QAnon-dominated events, including meetings and the Capitol storming, very few QAnon supporters wear masks when congregated.

While Trump never explicitly supported QAnon, he never condemned it either. Not all Trump supporters believe in QAnon, but most QAnon supporters align themselves with Trump, which showed at the Capitol on Jan. 6. Among the rioters who stormed the U.S. Capitol, many displayed their support for Trump and QAnon while sporting "Q"s on apparel, flags, and posters.

"I think everything from what we just witnessed on January 6th... a lot of the people who were storming the Capitol were spouting those lies and conspiracy theories," history teacher Joseph Schottland said.

One of the most distinctive figures of the Capitol Hill insurrection included self-proclaimed "QAnon Shaman" Jacob Chansley, who sported a horned headpiece and heavy face paint during the attack. After the breach and following his arrest, Chansley begged for a presidential pardon, citing that he breached the Capitol at Trump's request.

Chansley's belief in Trump's approval of the Capitol insurrection is one shared by many members of QAnon, as Trump repeatedly refused to condemn them, even once describing them as 'people who love our country'.

Trump's refusal to denounce these conspiracy theorists shows the tremendous impact that conspiracies continue to have on our higher branches of government.

"Just listen to any of the interviews of the people who were going into the [Capitol], and you'll hear those conspiracy theories, but all the way, it goes all the way up to the top," Schottland said.

The support for QAnon does not stop with the rioters at the Capitol, but also extends into the inner workings of the U.S. government. Georgian Republican Representative Majorie Taylor Greene and Colorado Representative Lauren Boebert previously identified with and shared QAnon theories.

Greene, Republican representative of Georgia's 14th congressional district, has been the most vocal with her support for the alt right conspiracy theory. Greene expressed her support for QAnon in 2017 when it first circulated, claiming that they were "worth listening to". The media has since then called out Greene for other baseless claims, like her theories about schools shooting being hoaxes as a way to achieve stricter gun control laws.

A video from 2019 surfaced of Greene heckling a Stoneman Douglas High School Shooting survivor David Hogg. Since the shooting in 2018, Hogg continues to push for gun control laws, which is why Greene targeted him.

With these conspiracies breaching the walls of the Capitol and the minds of politicians, it signals the susceptibility of the average American, and especially the modern teenager, to conspiracy theories online.

In a 2019 poll and collaboration with SurveyMonkey, Common Sense Media reported that about 54 percent of American teenagers read their news from social media platforms, and 50 percent get their news from YouTube. This statistic may alarm some Americans, since many educators consider social media to be an unreliable source of information.

"[The government] treated these social media platforms as entertainment and while people do get their entertainment from social media, particularly teenagers get their entertainment from social media, they're also getting their news [from there]. I think that social media has failed its responsibility to distinguish between entertainment and real news," Schottland said.

This hazy distinction between social media and online news signals the influx of conspiracy theories that dominates and divides today's politics. Some students even find that the prevalence of biased media adds to the growth of conspiracies, and that media bias education is crucial to understanding current events.

"I do think bias in the media has caused a lot, if [not] most, of the divide in the [U.S.]. The media is very dangerous and if you do not get the education to understand bias and 'fake news', you can be led to believe baseless ideas," junior Clea Hansen said.

After all, biased accounts on social media do have a precedent of inciting conspiracies. QAnon is one of many examples, as it started with a single anonymous message board and evolved into a political movement that infiltrated the government.

As a result of QAnon and other conspiracies' rising support through online platforms and politicians alike, many media users are now unsure of which sources of information to trust.

"With [Trump] and far left and right politicians backing many of these theories there has definitely been a rise of conspiracy theories. This can lead to major divide and mistrust in the people that we are supposed to trust," sophomore Juan Ruiz-Sagrero said.

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Human Trafficking in Contra Costa County

As more people turn a blind eye, the issue grows

Julia Poole, Sabrina Agazzi, Nastia Grits, and Sammy Lee | Online Feature Editor, Copy Editor, and Staff Writers

Every day in Contra Costa County (CCC), human traffickers kidnap, coerce, and exploit victims, making Califorinia the highest ranking state of human trafficking in America.

According to California's Penal Code Section 236.1, human trafficking occurs when "A person deprives or violates the personal liberty of another with the intent to obtain forced labor or services." According to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, in 2019, there were 22,326 victims of human trafficking in the United States, with 3,021 cases in California alone.

Due to safety and mental health related reasons, many victims do not report incidents of human trafficking leading county officials to believe the number of cases is actually much higher.

"Many [victims are]...shamed for what they've had to do. Many don't trust law enforcement or the criminal justice system because they fear that they will be in trouble. Or worse - have been threatened with violence to themselves or their loved ones if they 'snitch' or tell on an abuser," Contra Costa Deputy District Attorney Dana Filkowski said.

California law strives to protect human trafficking victims by providing confidential counselors who support victims without any legal interventions. Under Assembly Bill 629, courts summon exploitors, and victims often obtain compensation. Penal Code Section 236.23 also grants victims immunity for their illegal actions while being trafficked. Many local organizations such as the Calli House, Bay Area Legal Aid, International Rescue Committee, and Community Violence Solutions, provide therapy, housing, and intervention for human trafficking survivors.

"Not all of our victims are ready to engage with the criminal justice system, but they still need resources and help to break out of the cycle of exploitation," Filkowski said. "California law gives confidentiality to specially trained domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking counselors. That means that victims can talk to a professional counselor about what happened to them, learn about their options, and get help without fear of law enforcement or deportation. Otherwise, many victims will stay in an abusive situation, possibly until it's too late."

While many people believe human trafficking is a distant, obscure issue, the problem is actually much closer to home.

"Domestic human trafficking is happening to people in your schools, in your communities, in your neighborhoods. It is not an issue that is happening somewhere else. It is happening to people everywhere," Domestic Human Trafficking Survivor Karly Church said in her 2020 TedTalk "Domestic Sex Trafficking - A Survivor's Perspective".

Although no one is exempt from the threats of human trafficking, studies show that young people are common targets. According to The Counter Trafficking Data Collabortion (CTDC), about one quarter of all reported human trafficking victims from 2007 to 2017 were minors.

"Trafficking is all about identifying and exploiting vulnerabilities… so young people are particularly affected because they generally have less life experience, economic stability, and independence," Filowkski said. "[They also] may not know how to access law enforcement or victim service providers for help."

Apart from difficulty accessing help, victims can also endure manipulation by exploiters who trick them into believing they are helping a friend or significant other.

"Many times, a trafficker forms a relationship with a vulnerable victim just so that they can have power and influence over that person. For example, we see boyfriends pressuring their girlfriends to have sex for money and to give all the money to the boyfriend. Legally, that makes the boyfriend guilty of the crime of pimping. If there is force, fraud, coercion, duress, or violence involved, it turns from pimping into sex trafficking," Filowski said.

Oftentimes, human traffickers lure victims on social media by seeking out 'vulnerable' individuals and developing relationships with them.

"Often what will happen is the person will try and start the conversation in a more public forum and then they'll ask the person to move to a more private forum... If someone starts asking you for things online, like 'Can you send a picture of yourself?' or 'Can you tell me this information?' then they can use that to blackmail you later on," Human and Social Development (HSD) teacher Monika Voellm said.

Although many teens can recall instances of "stranger danger" on social media platforms, most disregard them as harmless.

"I've received DMs (Direct Messages) on Instagram from strangers asking for inappropriate pictures, and it definitely creeps me out, but I don't think most people actually take these threats seriously," an Anonymous Acalanes student said.

According to the Contra Costa Human Trafficking Coalition (CCHTC), some signs of an individual in a potentially dangerous situation are if that individual lacks knowledge about their whereabouts, lives and works in the same location, works excessively long hours, has little pay, and may not speak for themselves.

Some activists hope to challenge the notion that human trafficking is a "faraway" problem.

"Human trafficking, modern day enslavement, and unfair labor practices are not a 'them' problem. It is not something that only happens somewhere else. It is a U.S. problem, too. It exists in the Bay Area. And it happens in our community, too." AP Environmental Science and HSD teacher Jada Paniagua said.

If you or someone you know might be a victim of human trafficking, call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888 or text "HELP" to 233733.

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Recipe of the Issue: Hot Chocolate Bombs

Blueprint Photo/Liam McGlynn

Liam McGlynn | News Editor

Description:
If you're looking to fulfill your sweet tooth and you share my love of hot chocolate, then you should try making these hot chocolate bombs! Only taking 20 minutes to make, these tasty treats make great gifts for your friends and your teachers.

Tools:
Pastry Brush
2.5 Inch Silicone Spherical Mold

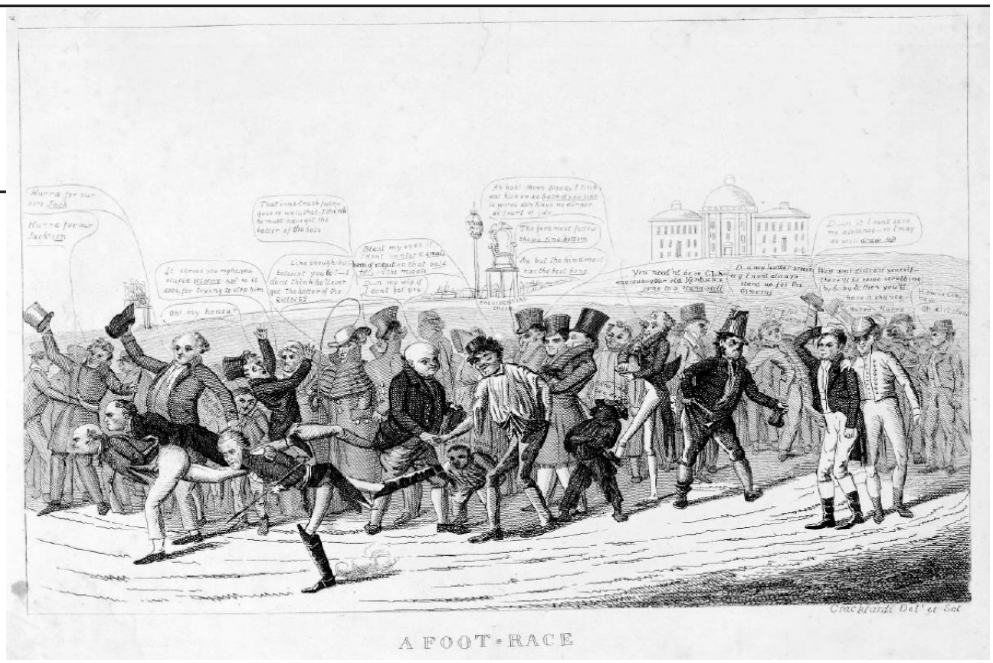
Ingredients for 6 Servings:
16 oz good-quality semi-sweet chocolate bar (such as Ghiradelli or Guittard)
Miniature marshmallows
Sweetened Hot chocolate mix (of your choice)
White chocolate (for decoration)

Instructions:
1. Chop the chocolate into fine pieces to allow the chocolate to melt quicker. Put the chocolate into a heat-safe bowl placed over a pot of simmering water—the bottom of the bowl should not be in contact with the water—and stir constantly until the chocolate is smooth and melted. Don't allow the chocolate to get too hot or it can burn. Turn down the heat.
2. Using the pastry brush, cover the inside of the molds evenly and thoroughly with the chocolate, making sure every inch of the inside of the mold is completely covered. Put the molds in the fridge for 5 minutes to set.
3. Remove the molds from the fridge and cover the inside of the molds again with plenty of chocolate. Make sure that the rims of the molds are thick enough to make it easier to remove the chocolate from the molds later.
4. After applying chocolate to the molds a second time, put the molds back into the fridge and wait another 5 minutes. Once the chocolate is set, check one last time to make sure the mold is thoroughly covered. Carefully remove chocolate out of the molds and put them on a plate. Meanwhile put a small pot of water on medium-low heat and rest a new plate over the pot.
5. One half sphere at a time, carefully place the rim of the chocolates on the warmed plate and lightly melt the chocolate, (this will only take a second, it will slightly melt the edges to allow for a clean seal).
6. As quickly as possible, take this half sphere and fill it with two teaspoons of hot chocolate mix and mini marshmallows.
Take another half sphere and briefly touch against the warm plate and press onto the filled half sphere, to form a full sphere, holding in place for a few seconds to ensure a proper seal. Repeat this process with the remaining spheres.
7. If you want, you can decorate with melted white chocolate or other decorations. I melt white chocolate and drizzle over the sphere using a fork.

Political Cartoons: Their Historical and Current Role in Our Media

The historical influence of political cartoons and how they have shaped our political engagement

Emerson Brown, Shrida Pandey, and Juliana Upp | Opinion Editor, Online News Editor, and Staff Writer



Courtesy Graphic/David Claypoole Johnson

Drawings are universal; they depict emotion, information, stories, and most importantly, they are accessible to all.

Political cartoons have played an essential role in the evolution of American democracy; in them, one can see the thematic parallels between historic and current events.

Political cartoons made politics widely more accessible to many people. In 1776, when the states adopted the Constitution, the literacy rate of the United States was 80 percent for men and 50 percent for women; this meant that 35 percent of the population could not read their country's founding documents or any newspapers for information. Furthermore, literacy rates among slaves and the working class were even lower, leaving out the lower class in political discourse.

"The reason [political cartoons are historically significant] is that literacy didn't become standard, until after the 1870s. And so, what you end up getting with political cartoons is the ability to send a message to a population that really didn't have the ability to read. These political cartoons became very very effective," history teacher Ed Seleenbacher said.

Political cartoons allowed illiterate constituents to understand what was going on in their government. Consequently, people became more inclined to vote and participate in the democratic processes.

Additionally, for those who could read, cartoons require less effort to understand and to process, making them an easy way to get involved in politics.

Thomas Nast, born in 1840, was the father of the political cartoon. His famous cartoons during the Gilded Age in New York City brought to light the corruption of the government and the full control Tammany Hall, a political machine, had on the government. Nast's cartoons publicized a New York Times investigation detailing the corruption in the New York government. The cartoons made members of society more aware of the investigation and started the spark for the downfall of Tammany Hall.

"[Nast] sets the standard for how important and significant [political cartoons] are, historically speaking. He's the one who created the modern image of Santa Claus. He's the one that also popularized the elephant and the donkey for the Republican and Democratic parties," Seelenbacher said.

Through political cartoons, one can look back at history and note similarities evident today. It is a citizen responsibility to care for this democracy, and political cartoons are an easy way to observe criticism and learn from the past mistakes.

1824- Adams, Clay, and Jackson

The election of 1824, better known as the "corrupt bargain," marked a bitter and historical time. Candidates John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson, Henry Clay, and William Crawford each vied for the presidency. Jackson received a plurality of popular and electoral votes. Because of this, the House of Representatives decided the presiding candidate. This cartoon depicts the candidates running in a foot race for the presidency, with Clay stepping out of the race and speaking with others. Clay used his influence among members of the House of Representatives to encourage them to elect Adams in return for a position as Secretary of State. Jackson denounced this result, coining the term "corrupt bargain" as a means of describing that the election results were unfair. He claimed that Adams had bought the vote, a claim never backed by any evidence yet widely spread. This parallels Donald Trump's unbacked claims of election fraud in the 2020 election. Although Trump contested the legitimacy of the popular vote, while Jackson argued the integrity of US representatives, both challenged the election results and declared illegitimacy.

1876 - Tilden and Hayes

In 1876, the two presidential candidates were Rutherford B. Hayes (Republican) and Samuel J. Tilden (Democrat). Tilden considerably outpolled Hayes in the popular vote, he received 184 votes compared to Hayes' 165 votes; 20 electoral votes were disputed. The Compromise of 1887 resolved the issue and all 20 electoral votes went to Hayes in exchange for his removal of troops from the South, effectively ending the Reconstruction Era. Reconstruction following the Civil War was heavily supported by Republicans who wanted to help integrate freed slaves into society. In contrast, Democrats wanted to retain the slave-society and unfair economic advantages white people gained from it. In this cartoon, Uncle Sam looks at the Consti-

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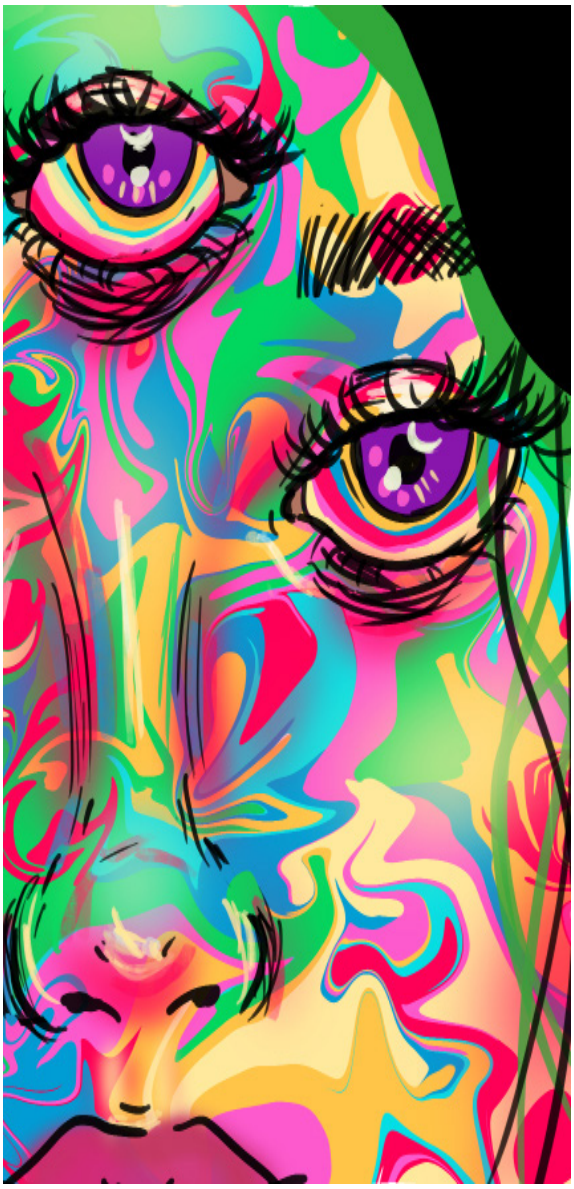
Psychedelic Art Over the Years: What a Trip!

Psychedelic style re-emerges in art and fashion

Catherine Lomond, Keith Johnson, Juliana Upp, Haley Rurka | Feature Editor, Head Videographer, Staff Writers



Blueprint Graphic/Freschtta Warres

Art takes form in many different media, like posters on one's wall, album cover art, and fashion statements. Many people gravitate towards vibrant colors, hypnotizing patterns, and free form shapes, which are themes derived from the psychedelic art movement that artists today emulate in their work.

Starting in the mid-1960s, the movement took the world by storm, as its style would later influence other mediums of art. Created by and for the youth of the 60s, the movement gets its name from psychedelic drugs, but it also has many other influences.

This era was full of historical events, like the Vietnam War and civil rights movements. Some youth were non-conforming and rebelled against authority, experimenting with drugs and spirituality.

Another influence on the art was the music; artists took cues from bands like Grateful Dead and The Beatles who also dabbled with drugs and philosophy. Art and music of this time are very intertwined and fueled each other. 60s artists like Wes Wilson and Victor Moscoso created music posters for bands.

Many people recognize the style for the use of bright colors and funky patterns that create a retinal experience. It's heavily influenced by the precursing surrealism movement from the 20s; both create dream-like worlds, but psychedelic art focuses on optical illusions as well.

"The retinal experience separates the psychedelic art from the surrealism too. The intense patterning and use of symmetry and imaging, makes it 'trippy.' It's more of a retinal experience than creating an illusion," art teacher Robert Porter said.

Porter teaches his art classes about the historical period and art movement, emphasizing the characteristics used to identify the style.

"Some of the characteristics are bright colors, ineligible writing in script that's not really meant to be read, it's more hidden and becomes a graphic element," Porter said. "There's lots of organic lines and shapes, and a lot of use of symbolism and fantasy, metaphysical elements. It's very detailed with a lot of filled in compositions, a lot of all over pattern."

Although its popularity has lessened over the year, many new artists are still interested in this genre of art. Those who take art classes not only learn about its history, but how to incorporate it into their own art.

Junior and artist Matthew Koo believes that the bright colors and surrealism of psychedelic art is what makes the works so visually appealing.

"I enjoy how the vibrant colors express what isn't seen in nature, which gives the art kind of an existential style. The chaos that is in some of the art stretches the bounds of normal art, which depicts reality," Koo said.

Other Acalanes students can appreciate the beauty of psychedelic art, even if they are not artists themselves.

"I like the patterns and colors you find in the art. I think psychedelic art is interesting because it's exploring somewhat otherworldly things and expressing them with art. But it can also be transforming something ordinary into a warped image," sophomore Gabriela Benveniste said.

Art is subjective, so some students have a distaste towards psychedelic art, whether it is because of the visuals or meaning. Due to it's intense patterns and bold colors, sophomore Kea Yoshinaka thinks that psychedelic art can be difficult to look at.

"I think if I sat down for a while I could find a deeper meaning but at a quick glance it would be confusing," Yoshinaka said.

When presented with the Blueprint graphic on this page, students interpreted it differently. One felt that it more closely reflected an event outside of the subject.

"It seems like she is opening her third eye, and kind of seeing a whole new outside world. The colors are all jumbled up which might also mean that she is perceiving the world differently and it's changing what is inside of her," sophomore Kyle Pass said.

Another student thought the piece reflected internal development.

"It looks like it's someone unlocking a deeper sense of self, meaning they are more aware and are becoming colorful, which makes me think that who they are is developing and coming out," sophomore Natalie Hiatt said.

While there is disagreement over the beauty of psychedelic art, a majority agree that the visual experience is like no other.

"Psychedelic art is extremely interesting and makes you think about what you are seeing, making it a very original form of art," Benveniste said.

Colorful Murals Decorate Downtown Walnut Creek

Artists in Walnut Creek Cover Once Barren Walls With Vibrant Murals

Jacque Peacock and Gabriella Gruber | Staff Writers

Seemingly overnight, Walnut Creek's lifeless walls became beautiful murals with intricate details and rich colors. The city's walls now burst with life after artists leave their unique touch on Walnut Creek.

During the fall and winter of 2020, five different artists painted several colorful murals on Main Street in downtown Walnut Creek. Each mural includes special features, varying from plants to animals. Onlookers can infer that each mural tells a story of its own.

Velia De Iuliis, an artist who painted a mural of flowers, described her piece on her website. The website says, "artwork depicts Flora interacting from around the world as symbols for our collective need to communicate on a global scale and come together to overcome the trials of the pandemic."

De Iuliis' mural stands among others that also bring hope for a brighter post-pandemic future. Casey Gray, another artist, painted a mural about the reopening of businesses in Walnut Creek. On the other hand, an artist named Ricky Watts simply wanted his art to elicit a smile from passersby.

"This project was less about inspiration and more about my painting process. My style of work is abstract so there's not an easy answer for what inspires it. It just kinda pours out of me. I've been developing this style over the years. Each piece is an extension of the last piece and it just keeps evolving," Watts said.

Late last year, the city of Walnut Creek asked Watts to contribute to their mural project.

"I was approached by the city about the project. They were surprisingly hands off about it. They basically said, 'hey, we like what you do. Will you be a part of this mural project we're working on?' I said yes, provided a rendering of what I'd like to paint and they approved it," Watts said.

Over the last few years, Walnut Creek peppered several artistic expressions throughout the city. These pieces of art include sculptures, murals, fountains, and even hand-painted pianos.

Blueprint Photo/Jojo Bishop

The artistic aspect adds to the culture of the Walnut Creek community.

"I believe art always contributes to a community. While certain pieces may not be everyone's style, simply having the exposure to different artists and their work is important," local resident Michaelyn Williams said.

Pedestrains stop and observe the detials of these recently composed pieces.

"I really like that cartoony one because it's got that statue of a bull that's in Walnut Creek. It's also got the Walnut Creek logo which is a square tree. They've also got the little trolley. It's always little things like that that catch your eye. They make you start to want to look at it more," digital design teacher Chris Busse said.

The pandemic posed as an obstacle to the mural creation process because it delayed the project's completion time. Artists also had to overcome the hurdle of social distancing.

"COVID delayed the project about four months. Painting murals is already pretty isolated for me, as I work alone. I just wore my mask the whole time and tried to be respectful of people's space as they passed by," Watts said.

Nevertheless, the finished mural project boosted the liveliness of Walnut Creek. The new artwork produced a positive reaction from the community.

"I think there's such a variety of work within the different murals and they offer something for everyone," Williams said.

Walnut Creek's bright colors and appealing imagery bring happiness and incite creativity.

"It's better than looking at a plain beige wall while walking down a hallway. It's cool to see people's different perspectives on what it means to make something beautiful," Busse said.

The city ultimately found success with promoting positivity through its latest mural project. Moving forward, residents would like to see more artwork that reflects Bay Area citizens and encourages unity through a difficult political and societal time.

"The current pieces are all very beautiful, but very 'safe' in terms of subject matter," Williams said. "Art can be very powerful and sending a message of cultural unity would add to the city."

The Push to Make Instagram "Casual"

Students explore new methods of posting on Instagram

Aysha Craig, Helen O'Neal, and August Walker | Copy Editor and Staff Writers

As picture after picture flashes across the screen, a blur of editing and filters often dominates the average Instagram feed. However, sometimes photos of friends smiling and laughing may pop up, and warrant a bright smile. These careless, unstaged photos candidly display a special moment, and may even express the light-heartedness of the user who posts them.

Unsurprisingly, teenagers make up a majority of Instagram users, and often set the tone for what the app deems as 'trendy'. Within this demographic, many students at Acalanes are active on Instagram, sharing photos their peers can engage with and respond to.

"I feel very connected to my friends when I am on Instagram because that is where I communicate with a lot of them," sophomore Aeryn Zupo said.

Sharing filtered, edited, or posed content is the current norm of Instagram culture. Although the app is a useful means for communication, some people feel pressured and restricted when deciding what to share with their followers.

"People don't want to be judged for posting something different because when they do, it is seen as 'brave' or 'risky'," junior Alara Rose said. "Society is slowly becoming less judgmental, but there are still lots of people that will talk behind your back because of what you post."

Some students argue about expectations surrounding what is or is not acceptable to post, creating an environment of increased stress and less creativity.

"I feel like there are unwritten rules that you can't post twice a day or that your photos have to be perfect in a certain way," junior Stella Bobrowsky said.

Users commonly curate the pictures of themselves that they post because they see other perfected photos cramming their timeline. Some teens believe this hampers the development of a casual Instagram where people can post anything they want, without worrying about how others will perceive them.

"A casual Instagram includes posting whatever you want: landscape photos, edits, pictures of anything that you are not in," Rose said.

Along with posting more frequent photos with less staging, some individuals have learned to edit their pictures in a way that emphasizes and draws attention to their artistry, as opposed to ways that hide and disguise insecurities.

"I love over-editing my photos on Instagram [by using] apps like Lightroom, Picsart, and Superimpose," junior Brooke Blacklidge said.

As users post more photos that feel authentic to themselves, they also create longer picture feeds that can become aesthetically pleasing and personal.

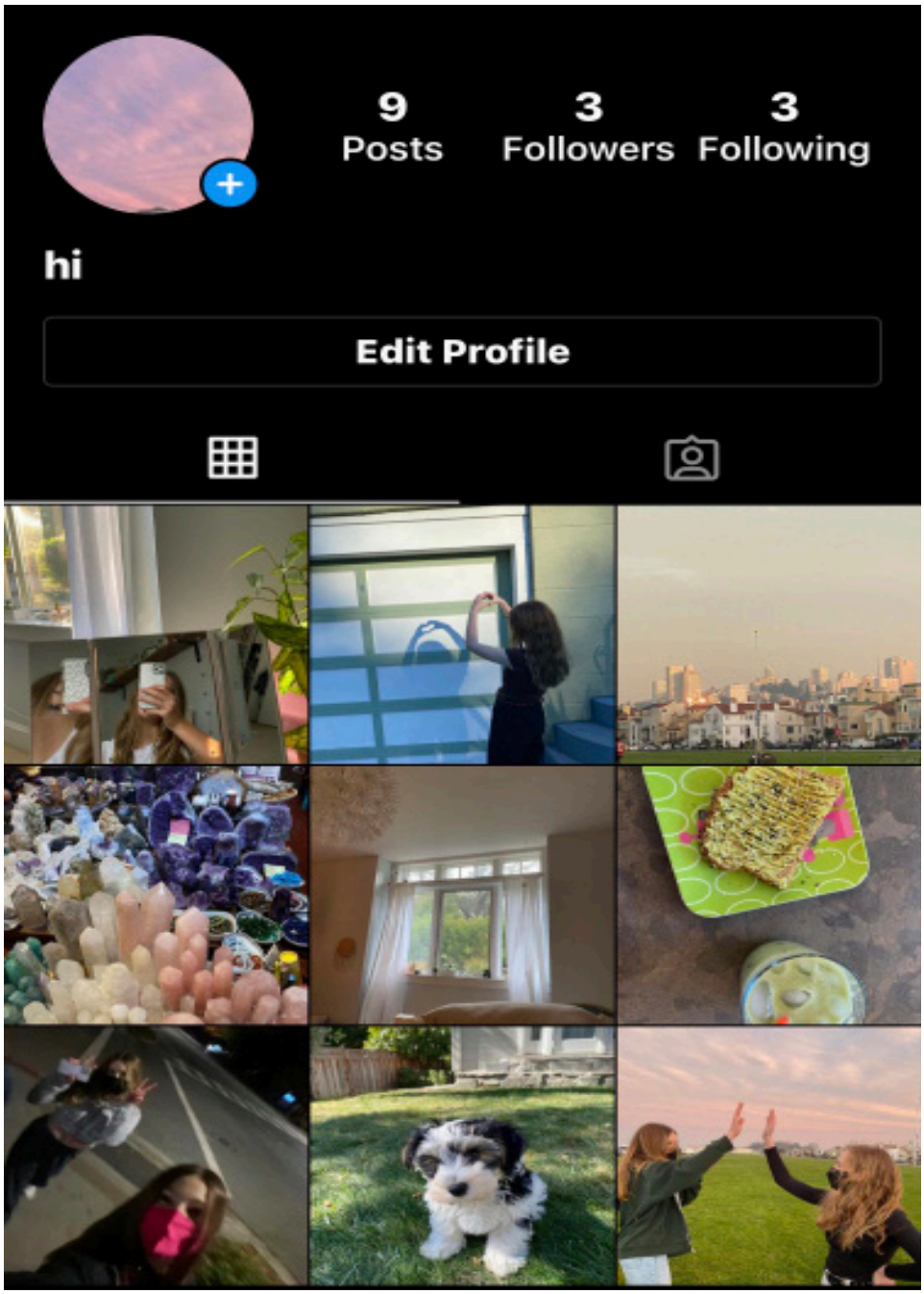
"I think when you make Instagram more casual you learn more about the individual [because] it opens a wider eye into their life," Blacklidge said.

Oftentimes, in 'serious' social media environments with many unspoken norms, people take posts out of context and warrant false messages or extreme reactions. In a casualized environment people don't feel this tension and hesitation when sharing pictures.

"I would love for [social media apps] to be more casual," math teacher Misha Buchel said. "Certainly so that something that someone tweets when they are in a fleeting moment doesn't end up being a life-ruining event."

Making Instagram casual allows for an accepting outlet for both students and teachers alike who take pleasure in sharing photos and videos.

"Not having to change your role or your pictures creates happiness and authenticity," Spanish teacher Heidi Skvarna said.



Blueprint Graphic/Emma Uffelman

Snacks with Xie: Let's Talk About Food Gentrification!

Join me as I sophisticatedly rant about 'food gentrification'

Lizzy Xie | Managing Editor

Hi, hello. It's been a while, but I am happy to say that Snacks with Xie is back! I have been in a college application induced state of "what" for a while, but I have since recovered from that and am more than ready to write about food again.

I would like to delve a little more into a less lighthearted subject. This food column has been a space where I always casually write about food I enjoy and the warm, fuzzy, feelings that come along with good food. However, I also want to talk about the gentrification of food, specifically Asian food.

Understandably, this food-gentrification goes beyond Asian food, but I feel that I can speak on a personal level about Asian food and its gentrification.

Food gentrification is a term to describe the glamourization of ethnic foods that were once deemed as "foreign" or "gross" by white people.

Here's a chief example of gentrification at its culinary finest: in 2019, white wellness blogger Arielle Haspel, along with her husband, opened "Lucky Lee's." She proclaimed this restaurant to be a healthy alternative to American-Chinese food, which was deemed to be gross and unhealthy.

Haspel explained that the restaurant was for people who wanted a "clean" alternative to American-Chinese food that would make them "feel good" after eating.

Aside from the stereotypical name of the restaurant, Haspel's actions portrays ethnic Chinese food in a bad light. By calling her alternative clean, she is implying that Chinese food is dirty and unhealthy.

Before getting into the details of Chinese food, it is important to note that there is a huge difference between Chinese food and American-Chinese food. American-Chinese food is a cuisine created by Chinese immigrants to tailor to American tastes.

Chop suey, General Tso's chicken, and fortune cookies are not traditional Chinese dishes. In fact, if you asked someone in China what they associate with these dishes, they would probably tell you, "American-Chinese food."

Traditional Chinese food is an art that is perfected through generations. It is complex, time consuming, and is filled with elaborate techniques and uses high quality ingredients to produce a perfect dish.

For Haspel to take this rich cuisine and reduce it down to a "Baked Orange Cauliflower" is downright offensive, and even though this happened 4 years ago, it is still relevant today.

In the television show Fresh Off the Boat, Eddie, one of the main characters, begs his mom to let him bring Lunchables to school after his schoolmates made fun of his Xiao Long Bao, or soup dumplings. This is an experience many immigrant children face at school, whether it is Chinese food, or curry, many times, they avoid bringing ethnic foods for the sake of fitting in.

I have a distinct memory of a friend telling me about the time her elementary school peers called the noodles she brought for lunch, worms. She told me she felt ashamed of her food and subsequently, insisted--on bringing "normal" food like peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for lunch.

To see mainstream American culture embrace our food is wonderful. But sometimes, I can't help but feel a little put off by it. The excessive changing of traditional dishes to cater to the wellness bloggers is tone-deaf and disrespectful. Understandably, people want to market towards a certain group. But if you want to use my culture, you shouldn't cherry pick. Learn about the cuisine completely. Don't serve a watered down version of a "healthy" version of Chinese food.

Fuchsia Dunlop is the perfect example of someone who respectfully writes about Chinese cuisine. Dunlop became appreciative of traditional Chinese food after spending time in Chengdu while working for BBC. From there, she studied the cuisine at a culinary school in Sichuan. In this process of learning, she spoke to locals and completely immerse herself into the culture.

Dunlop should be an example people look towards when approaching any ethnic cuisine. You don't have to travel to the country, but by learning the language, speaking with people who know the cuisine well, and most importantly, not watering down any dishes, I would be more than happy to enjoy your cooking.

Food is culture and history. By reducing it down to fit a trend is reducing the culture and history down to nothing. You are allowed to enjoy my culture's cuisine, but I ask for you to do it respectfully.

layout by zoe edelman

Quote of The Issue

"As long as there is love and memory, there is no true loss" - Cassandra Clare

Kayli Harley | Online Editor-in-Chief

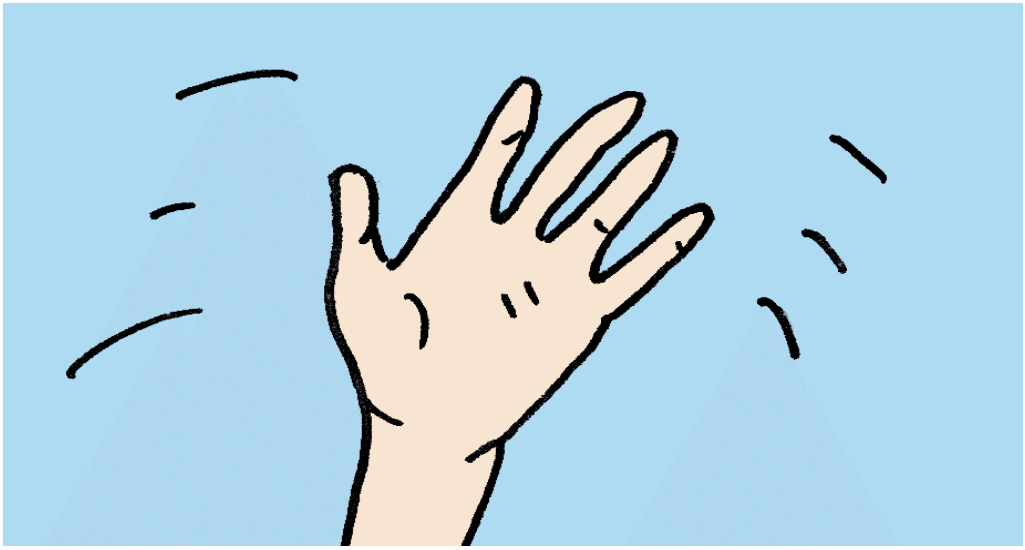
Chris Huber was my teacher during my freshman year. Some of my close friends were in his class too, and we used to say hello to him in the hallways whenever we saw him. He would look up, and a cheerful smile would spread across his face as he asked us how we were doing.

His smile was infectious, always reminding me that kindness is a gift we can give for free. I can still see that smile; it warms me to know that each one was genuine.

I didn't realize it then, but from his encouraging words during the push-up final to his passion for table tennis, he made that year brighter for me. When I heard the news of his passing, all I wanted to do was see the joy in his face again as he hit another forehand winner on one of his students. He came alive in those moments.

Huber cared about the details. He took the time to teach us the proper way to dribble and shoot a basketball, hit a badminton birdie, and swim the different strokes. He taught us the little things matter because they set the foundation for everything we do.

He was an embodiment of that virtue. Every smile, every greeting, and every act of kindness he gave spread happiness throughout the hallways. If I know one thing about Huber's legacy, it's that he will live forever at Acalanes High School. His joy laces the halls, and his smile lives in everyone who had the privilege of receiving it.



Blueprint Graphic/Zoe Edelman

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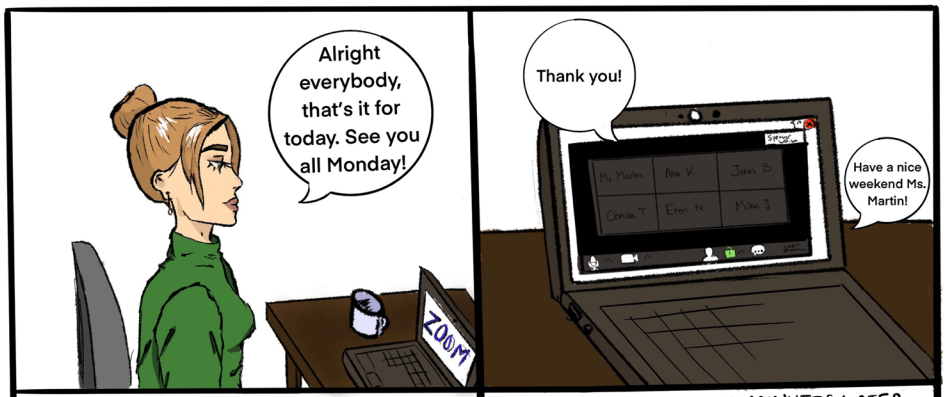
tution upside down and tries to find another way to look at the election, demonstrating the way this election was not entirely decided constitutionally but rather through political bargains. We can hear the echoes of this election in racial tensions, explicitly demonstrated by right wing extremist and white supremacist groups that stormed the Capitol. Additionally, Uncle Sam in this cartoon can represent former President Trump's unsubstantiated claims of voter fraud and using the courts and electoral certification to avoid accepting the true outcome of the election.

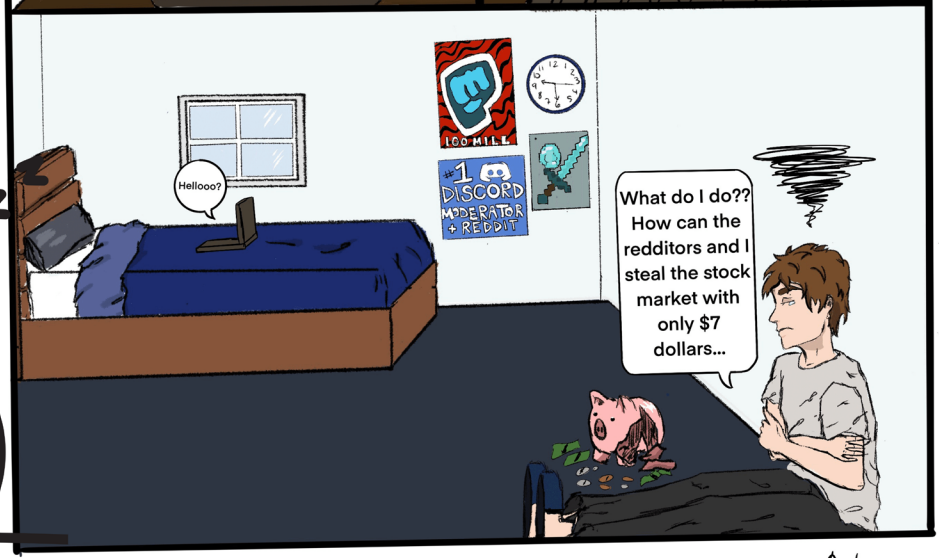
1884 - Cleveland and Blaine

In 1884, the two presidential candidates were New York governor Grover Cleveland (Democrat) and Maine's James G. Blaine (Republican). The notability of this election lies in rampant personal attacks and focus on the candidates. "Mulligan letters" revealed that Blaine sold his influence in Congress to various businesses, being rewarded over 1.5 million in today's dollars from his corruption. Cleveland's scandal came out when people revealed that he raped a woman and conceived a child. His campaign spun this as a consensual affair and claimed that it was best for the woman and child's privacy to leave them alone. In this cartoon, the child screams "I want my Pa", a reference to the campaign chant from Cleveland's opponents of "Ma, Ma, where's my Pa?" Cleveland has a tag on his coat saying "Grover the Good" which was his nickname for his personal integrity before the scandal arose. The woman cries while Cleveland covers his ears and tries to walk past, ignoring the hardship he has caused. The personal attacks throughout the 2020 campaign cycle are eerily similar to 1884. Trump attacked Hunter Biden and the Biden family's legitimacy, while both candidates were accused of sexual harassment by multiple women. This focus on candidates over campaigns bleeds on into today, forever changing the presidency.

2020- Biden and Trump

The 2020 presidential election between President Joe Biden and the incumbent former President Donald Trump will go down in history as one of the most divisive times in American history. The campaign trial among these candidates became competitive battlegrounds as both competed over swing states and on edge voters. The election featured many personal attacks and insults among the candidates and a consistent attack by Trump on the voting mechanisms before the election happened. This presidential election occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in people choosing between mail in ballots, to remain socially distant, or in-person voting at a poll booth on Nov. 3. Democrats tended to vote with mail in ballots while Republicans listened to Trump's baseless claims about mail in voting fraud and chose in-person voting. Despite an overwhelming victory for Biden in the popular and electoral vote, Trump told his supporters that the election was a fraud because he did not win. In this political cartoon, we see Trump advocating fraud and a conspiracy theory to his voters and telling his supporters that the legal votes Biden received did not count. Because of Trump's wide following, this misinformation dominated the media allowing him to spread false claims on platforms like Twitter and Fox News. Ultimately, Trump's actions led to his supporters storming the U.S. Capitol, Congress trying to impeach him for the second time, and him leaving the office with one of the worst approval rates in history.




Hellooo?
100 MILL
#1 DISCORD MODERATOR + REDDIT
What do I do?? How can the redditors and I steal the stock market with only $7 dollars...

Allie Marcus

Donald Trump's Impact on Generation Z

And what that effect on the future voting generation means for America

Emerson Brown | Opinion Editor

On Jan. 6, 2021, I walked downstairs to see my mom watching the television, horrified. Donald Trump's supporters crowded around the capitol waving Confederate flags and screaming "stop the steal." They had not yet stormed the Capitol, but when they did, I wasn't surprised. That's not because I'm nihilistic, a neo-Nazi, or didn't know what was happening; it was because I grew up and politically matured during Trump's presidency.

That is the true effect of Trump's tenure; Generation Z matured when the media and society normalized Trump's actions, politicians refused to reprimand him, and politics became a joke. We see this as the normal and can elect politicians that fit this 'new normal.'

This is not a far away threat. Generation Z votes now.

Throughout history, the President of the United States has been referred to as "the leader of the free world" and "the most influential person on earth." People look to the White House for a moral compass and a way to act. Children look to it, leaders look to it, citizens in other countries all look to the White House as an example. That precedent made Trump's danger even more pressing. Everyone around the world saw his every action, Tweet, or speech.

Through these four years, my peers and I have matured with a background of chaos, uncertainty, unpredictability, and crime. We must take a look at the examples Trump has set and realize the 'unprecedented' presidency may not be a one-time thing.

The first notable example Trump set was years before the election. In October 2016, The Washington Post released a recording from 2005 where Trump said "I just start kissing [women]. It's like a magnet. Just kiss. I don't even wait. And when you're a star, they let you do it. You can do anything… Grab 'em by the p***y." We elected him anyway.

When the President of the United States blatantly disregards boundaries and, according to Business Insider, has 25 accusations of sexual assault, it sets an example to young kids that their voices do not matter and they do not have control over their bodies. An example that old white men are in power and should remain that way.

Trump referred to Haiti and African nations as "sh**hole" countries when meeting with senators in January 2018. To have the leader of the free world call an entire continent's countries "sh**holes" is not only amazingly racist but sets an example that people's covert racism is okay and can be broadcasted to the world. It is unacceptable. It is horrid.

Not only racist, Trump is a white supremacist. His comments in August 2017 that "there were very fine people on both sides" of the Charlottesville, North Carolina Unite the Right rally, and telling the Proud Boys to "stand back and stand by" in October 2020 brought to light the true scale and threat of white supremacy in America.

He normalizes a hateful, historic ideology that has killed innumerable amounts of people. His actions combined with politicians and the media's lack of reprimanding of his actions told malleable young voters that those beliefs are valid and should be spread.

His actions have killed many, both directly and indirectly; Trump motivated the shooter in Dayton, Ohio in 2019 who killed nine people. His policies on immigration and urge to have immigrants "remain in Mexico" have left Latin Americans stuck in countries plagued by the exact gang violence they are trying to escape. His rhetoric ignoring the result of a free and fair election led to the death of five people in the Capitol storming.

Trump's effects will plague society and politics for the foreseeable future. We can want to believe it will be over now that Trump is out of office, but these effects reach further than just the presidency. Now, senators and representatives that stray from Trumpism can be voted out by new, young Republicans, further solidifying this system and making the Republican party the party of Trump.

Not only did Trump rally up an extremely conservative base, but on the opposite end of the spectrum, he caused the more liberal side to lose faith in the democratic process and in our government. He caused a rift in the growing population; one with overly nationalistic views and one with no patriotism at all.

The solution was to impeach and convict Trump as a final rebuke, but the Senate voted 57 guilty to 43 not guilty, not passing the 67 vote threshold to convict him. Still, it signaled that 7 Republicans still have the conscience to vote against Trumpism. Now, Biden must attempt to bring back America's reputation, both internationally and domestically.

Everyday, we can tell ourselves 'this is not normal;' yet after four years of Trump's actions, it is the normal we must diverge from.

Blueprint Cartoon / Freschetta Warres

Breaching the Digital Divide

The internet must become a public utility

Erin Hambridge | Staff Writer

When the internet was first introduced to the public 30 years ago, it was a luxury, a phenomenon very few had access to and even fewer could afford. Decades later, we find ourselves living in a digital age dependent on the services the internet offers us.

Due to the internet's crucial role in modern education, communication, and industry, as well as its heightened importance due to COVID-19, the internet must be a public utility just like gas and electricity.

Despite being commonly associated with web browsers, the internet is a web of interconnected computer networks that provide services such as email, video conferencing, social networking, and video games. This larger web can be broken down into three sections: the backbone, data centers, and the last mile.

The backbone is made up of long-distance networks that connect data centers, buildings of servers that store data, to consumers. The last mile connects homes and small businesses to the internet through commercial providers (Comcast or Verizon, for example.) The communication system that links at-home computers to the internet is known as broadband.

Internet providers, data center managers, the backbone, and the last mile, currently have minimal regulation. This results in competitive pricing, unreliable service, and capitalism determining business rather than consumer interest and needs.

A public utility is a service that falls under the government's jurisdiction, meaning state or federal governments strictly regulate providers. Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E), which supplies and maintains northern California's gas and electricity, is an example of a company that provides necessary services and is deemed a public utility. Therefore, it needs approval from the California government before raising its prices. The same does not apply to internet providers which is why the internet is so expensive compared to a utility like electricity.

Since its integration into the American public in 1995, the number of internet users increased 76 percent, according to the Pew Research Center. Despite this growth, a report by BroadbandNow stated that an estimated 42 million U.S. citizens still lack broadband internet access. That is 42 million people without access to a service that plays a fundamental role in our society.

The consequences for students without broadband access are even more severe, as it directly affects the quality of their education and their ability to complete assignments. A 2018 Pew Research Center survey found that one in five teens ages 13-17 are unable to complete their homework due to poor internet.

Placing the internet under public regulation could allow schools to negotiate lower prices for internet access, as the current funding they receive does not cover the cost of setting up WiFi and internet hotspots for students without broadband at home.

Beyond just affecting academic performance, the repercussions of this extend far into a student's future, impacting their ability to receive a higher education and enter the workforce. According to Pew Research Center, only 71 percent of adult Americans without a high school degree have internet access, compared to 98 percent of college graduates.

The correlation between internet access and socio-economic status applies to varying factors such as race and community as well. As of 2019, a study by Pew Research Center found that only 85 percent of Black Americans have internet access, compared to 92 percent of their white counterparts. This digital divide is a product of the systemic racial discrimination that exists in our country, which disproportionately impacts marginalized communities.

On average, Black households in the United States earn only one tenth of the amount white households do.

Continued on page 31

Blueprint Cartoon / Sabrina Agazzi

Acalanes Must Teach Black History

"Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented" -Elie Wiesel

Amani Williams | Contributing Writer

To Whom It May Concern:

Over and over again, I'm told that "we have expanded to teach more of a conclusive history" or "we are reading more books written by people of color." While that is an appreciated start, there are more actions that can be taken to teach my history. This is not a want, a suggestion, or a desire; it is a necessity.

African American history needs to be a required course similar to U.S. History; after all, my ancestors were the ones who built this nation. In school, we are only taught about the brief history of the triangle trade and how slavery benefited America. We learn about the basics of the Emancipation Proclamation and the Civil War, which is often taught in a single class period. It is impossible to cover all 400 years of slavery in a day. If we're lucky we may learn a bit of the Civil Rights era.

The reality is that America benefitted from the institution of slavery. This is American history. The survival of my people in spite of everything set in place against us: That is Black History. From the capture of Africans from their homes to systemic racism today, it's essential to teach Lafayette's youth about African American history. It could easily fit into a history requirement for sophomores. This educational change will not only reduce the insensitivity and ignorance of my fellow students on campus, but a class on Black History will create a well-rounded student who will know how to interact with people who are different without offending them unknowingly.

I need a class to be taught where I can gain in-depth knowledge of all of my history. I need the ugly truth of how Black Americans were treated by their white counterparts to be exposed. I need the whole truth to be known, not just one point of view. I need people to know about the history of the N-word and to not use it. From known heroes like Martin Luther King Jr., the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and John Lewis to unknown heroes like the Tuskegee Airmen, George Washington Carver, and Lewis Howard Latimer, I need to learn about Black American heroes. I need students to know about the depth of Negro Spirituals, gospel music, and the history of blues to current music today created by black artists. I need students to know about blackface, blaccents, cultural appropriation v.s. cultural appreciation, and microaggressions. It is not my job to educate people on how to talk to me without insulting my culture or being.

I shouldn't have to deal with people calling my head wrap a do-rag or with racist comments. I've been called, and I quote a " hairy-ass n****** monkey." Since George Floyd's murder, I'm noticing a lot of students posting things to be considered "woke" but not understanding the full depth of the Black Lives Matter movement or the Civil Rights movement. I need people to see and know the importance of what my people have fought and are still fighting. I need people to know what my people have died and are dying for.

In writing this, I don't want sympathy but rather empathy and action. When my history is taught in a school, I need someone who looks like me and understands the struggle of growing up Black in America to teach it. Though my ancestors started the path, I am carrying the torch passed on from generation to generation; I will push to further the education of Black history. While we are victims of racism, we are victors of a system made to keep us down. As new generations are born, we must not forget the whole of history nor only rely on limited textbooks. How can we try to heal America without informing future generations of the accomplishment of their elders?

Digital Divide

Continued from page 30

Due to this wealth inequality, Black Americans are far less likely to be able to pay for broadband internet. Government regulation would ensure affordable and consistent prices to make the internet accessible to all, regardless of race.

Servicing rural areas is not financially viable for internet providers, leading to only 85 percent of people living in rural areas with internet access, contrasted with 94 percent in suburban areas. Larger companies can make more money by staying within the bounds of suburban and urban areas, at the cost of leaving rural households without internet access. Public regulation would force them to provide for all areas, even when it is not profitable for their business.

Through public regulation, households below the poverty line that are unable to afford regulated internet prices would be able to seek financial aid through the California Department of Community Services and Development (CSD). This organization offers assistance to PG&E customers who cannot pay their electricity bills, which is why even the poorest of households have electricity. As of now, the CSD cannot assist people without internet access, because it does not fall under the California government's jurisdiction, however, if the internet became a public utility, this would change.

In today's day and age, the internet encompasses far more than just education and industry, as we now depend on it for communication and social interaction. Due to COVID-19, everyone finds themselves relying solely on the internet services, such as social media and video conferencing, to communicate with their friends,family, and coworkers. Those without access to this find themselves alienated and alone, essentially kept in the digital dark.

This isolation shows that we cannot afford to discount the internet's ability to connect people in times of hardship. As American society adapts to the new reality COVID-19 created, it's time for our utilities to adapt as well.

While it may not be viable to promote only one or two internet companies as primary service providers for the public, it is possible to regulate all of them through a reclassification by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

Title II of the Communications Act gives the FCC the power to regulate internet providers as utilities, and force them to service the public under reasonable terms and pricing. This can be achieved if the FCC reclassifies broadband as a telecommunications service.

We need utilities that are representative of our future, not our past. The digital divide is not something that can be breached overnight, but with increased public regulation and reclassification of internet providers, it is possible to make the internet accessible to all.

A Mindset of Mutual Responsibility

The challenges of the past year remind us of our growing responsibility to each other

Brendan Connelly | Staff Writer

Most people have heard the phrase, "we all make mistakes." Whether we heard it as kids, say it to our own kids, or hear it after disappointment, we know what it means. This phrase, however, withholds an important truth: although it is natural to make mistakes, we must learn from them or put in our best efforts to fix them.

In the days following the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol, I learned more about the frightening events and saw lists of people resigning following the catastrophe. This seriously bothered me; in government, resignations cannot be an acceptable way to handle failure. When a person takes such a job, it is their responsibility to perform to their best ability, make mistakes, and fix their mistakes, all for the good of the nation.

There are certainly nuances to this. A mistake is one thing; a crime is another. Trump incited an insurrection at the U.S. Capitol and put our senators and representatives in danger, which is a federal offense. Trump should have been arrested. Trump should have resigned.

That discussion, however, is not the purpose of this piece. The question that we must ask is this: why do people resign when they make a mistake?

The answer is obvious; they don't want to be tainted. They don't want to carry whatever burdens need to happen for the rest of their professional career. This, in itself, is totally reasonable, but it molds an individualistic mindset. If everyone resigned and fled from a difficult situation, our nation's democratic system wouldn't work. No one would be there to fix the mistakes, manage the difficult situations. At the very least, the best people wouldn't be there to do their jobs.

Individualistic mindsets and selfish egos grew dramatically in recent years due to the digital era. In the last one hundred years, the global population has grown by about five billion people, and the power of the Internet has allowed unforeseen connections globally. The importance and power of this cannot be understated.

Nevertheless, people, in general, have never felt more disconnected. If there are so many people, it is easy to reason there will always be someone else to handle problems that come up. This surely furthered the anti-collectivist mindset that is so easy to embrace today.

There are many examples of this individualistic mentality surrounding the events at the Capitol. Elaine Chao, the former transportation secretary, resigned, as did many others, citing the events at the Capitol on Jan. 6 and in the President's cabinet as an explanation for her resignation.

Apparently, these events did not disturb her enough to help push for the 25th Amendment to remove Trump from office. Her resignation, and the resignations of many others just like her, also undermine the impact of this event.

The Capitol riots challenged the government of the people. The people participating in the riots thought their voices deserved to be stronger than the rest of the people in our nation. It hurt the integrity of the United Statesand set a horrifying precedent. Anyone remotely involved did not have the right to just walk away. They had the responsibility to do everything in their power to return the voice to the people and repair any other damage caused.

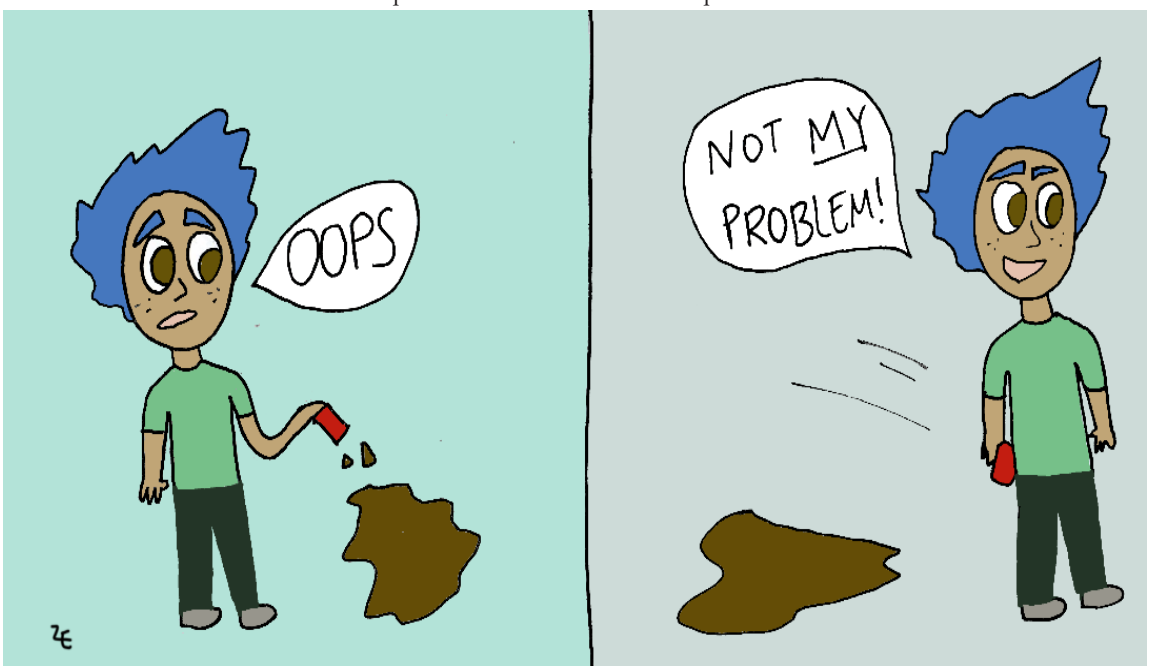
An example of a slightly more honorable reaction to the events were that of Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, surprisingly. He helped repair the damage done by the Capitol riots by staying in office. Immediately following the riots, McConnell helped control the Republican party and push for the certification of the Presidential election.

While he did not resolve the problems he allowed Trump to create for the past four years, he held his ground and pushed forth the important election certification. More importantly, the pressure forced him to act in a bipartisan manner. Not resigning forced him to make change.

A similar example is Former Vice President Mike Pence. Trump expressed his anger at Pence in front of his supporters for not working harder to invalidate the results of the Presidential election. Pence remained Vice President and led the certification of election results, helping bring the country back together.

While this is oversimplification of the complexity of the recent political landscape, the point is clear: resignation cannot be the easy option. If it was not offered as an easy way out of a difficult situation, an individual would have no choice except to work to resolve whatever that issue may be.

As the world progresses and changes, greater complexities arise and the easier it is to embrace an individualistic mentality. We, as people, have a responsibility to each other to maintain our responsibility to each other. We need to hold each other to a high standard.



Blueprint Cartoon / Zoe Edelman

Safety over Simplicity for Driver's Tests

The process of getting a driver's license in California is flawed

Griffin Ruebner | Staff Writer

Many teenagers know the feeling; they pull into the parking spot in front of the Department of Motor Vehicles and turn off the ignition of their car as they silently, patiently, breathlessly, wait as the test evaluator tallies up their mistakes and ponders their notes. Finally, the evaluator puts their clipboard down, looks them in the eyes, and says the two words you have been waiting for: "you passed".

Many teenagers complete the path to obtaining their driver's licenses by the age of 16, but there are faults in the current system that must be addressed and reformed to ensure the safety of our roads.

In California, any person at age 15 and a half can take a permit test after completing an online driver's education course. Any score above 83 percent passes and new drivers are then given their instructional permit. After taking a two hour driving lesson with an instructor, teenagers can drive with a California-licensed driver over the age of 25, although two more two hour lessons will be required before they take the behind-the-wheel test.

After teenagers accumulate 50 hours of driving with their parents and have held their permit for six months, they are free to take the driving test. The test takes anywhere from 5 to 20 minutes and you can make up to 15 minor errors during this period without failing. If test-takers make a "critical error" like striking an object or disobeying a traffic sign, however, they automatically fail. If they pass the test, they are rewarded with your restricted license, which they must hold for a year before they can drive anyone under the age of 20 in your car.

It is important to note that this is the quickest path to a license. Variations of the process exist depending on age and other factors.

Changing the age required to test for a driver's license from 16 to 18 is one necessary step towards improving the licensing process.

Younger drivers account for a disproportionately large number of crashes; data collected by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) from 2014-2015 found that in the United States, for every 100 million miles traveled, there were on average 1,432 crashes involving 16 and 17 year olds, but only 730 involving 18 and 19 year olds.

Teenagers that are 16 years old do not have the same level of cognitive development as they do at the age of 18. The ability to have strong judgement skills in situations where pressure is being applied does not mature until at least the age of 18, according to New Scientist. When in control of a car, the driver is oftentimes put in pressure-filled situations where they need to react and 16 year olds simply cannot do this as well as older drivers.

By raising the legal driving age, 16 year olds would be forced to use more environmentally friendly methods of transportation. Also, Congestion levels in communities would be lowered as a result of the age change, as there would be less drivers on the road.

Other states have started to consider raising the age needed to obtain a driver's license, and some already have better age restrictions in place. In Arkansas, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, New Jersey, and more, the earliest age at which drivers can obtain a full, non-restricted license is 18.

Another way to correct the system of obtaining a license in California is to revise the behind-the-wheel testing system.

The California test ranges from anywhere from five to twenty minutes, which is much too short. Evaluators cannot get a true sense of someone's driving skill in such a short period of time.

While driving, there are a few basic things the evaluator is looking for. The test taker must demonstrate the ability to control the car while turning and stopping, stay in their lane, and abide by road regulations and signs. The test, however, does not cover many more dangerous maneuvers like U-turns, three point turns, highway driving, and parallel parking.

These are all aspects of driving that are necessary to learn, as they are needed constantly in everyday life. A driver could technically pass their test without ever doing any of these things and get thrown into a situation where lacking these abilities could put themselves or others at risk.

Another issue lies in the fact that once a person passes the behind-the-wheel test, they do not have to continue to take the test periodically and to prove their skills.

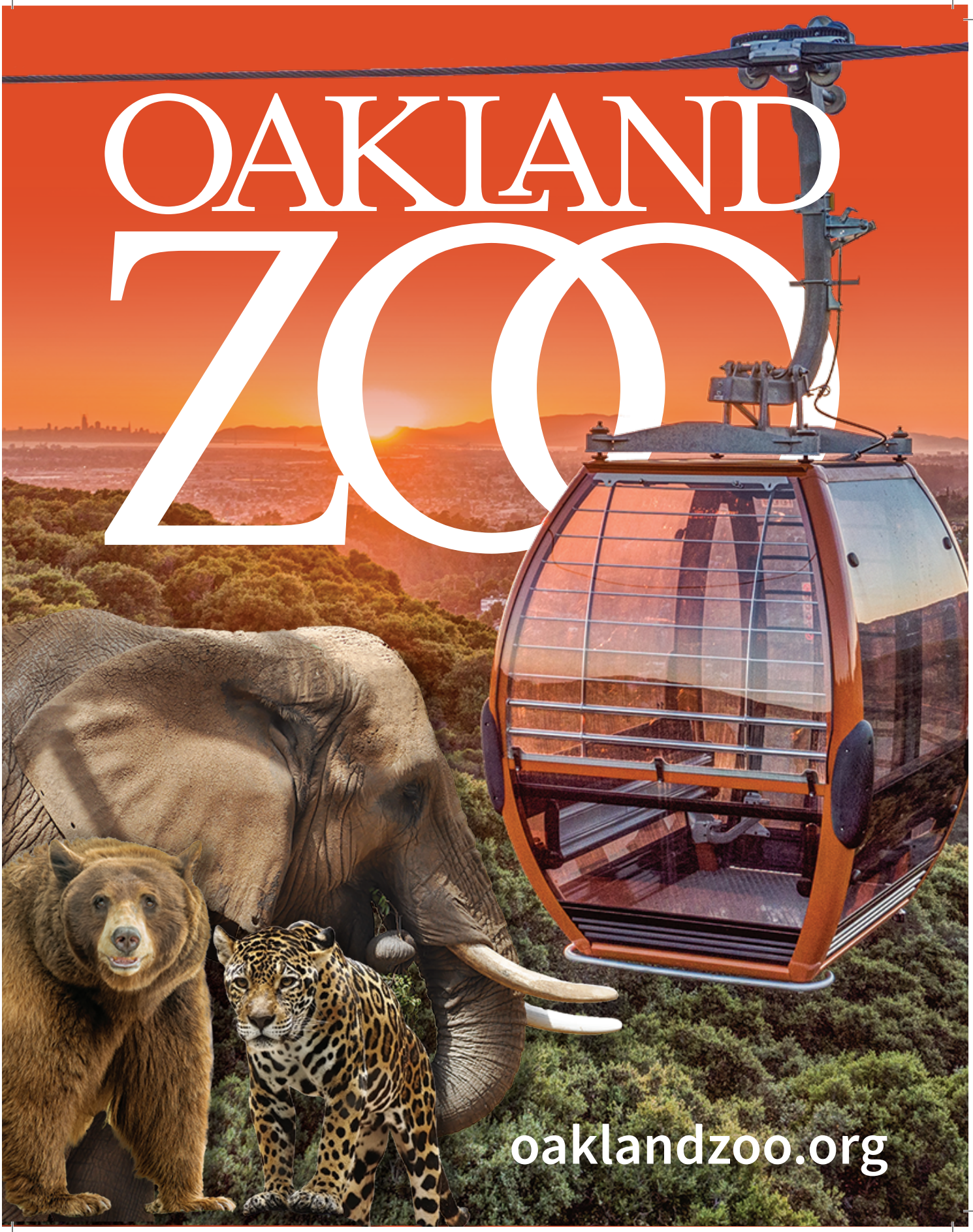
The solution is simply to create a more comprehensive test. California must have follow up tests every few years to prove that drivers can still navigate roads safely.

In Britain, the behind-the-wheel test lasts for 40 minutes, yet the number of minor errors allowed is the same as the much shorter test in America. Because it is longer, the British version of the test is also able to cover more maneuvers and allow the examiner to get a better sense of the driver's readiness.

Other countries with more in-depth and difficult testing systems generally have a safer standard of driving. In 2016, for every 100,000 people, the estimated road traffic death rate in America was 12.4 people, while the rate in the United Kingdom was only 3.1 people, according to the World Health Organization.

It is blatantly obvious that the process of getting a driver's license in California needs to be amended, as to ensure the safety and well-being of the people. When talking about as dangerous of a privilege as operating a car, the state must take every precaution to ensure that the recipient of a license is ready and prepared for anything they might encounter.

Blueprint Photo / Arlyne Noguera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PROJECT LPIE 2021

Acalanes Students... SHOW US WHAT YOU'VE GOT!

8th Annual

Project LPIE is a project based competition in 10 categories that allow Acalanes High School students to showcase their skills.

Project LPIE is open to all Acalanes High School students. Projects may be created within or outside the classroom.

Cash prizes are awarded for 1st, 2nd and 3rd places.

Important Dates

March 22nd - Register Online

Let LPIE know that you want to **submit a project by completing the online registration form.** You will receive a confirmation email from LPIE.

April 12th - Projects Due

Submit your project online by 11:59pm using the link provided in your confirmation email. This submission gives you the opportunity to tell LPIE a bit about your project.

May 6th - Announcement of Winners

Winners will be announced online

Project Categories

- 2D Fine Art
- Community Service
- Creative Writing
- Digital Design
- Editorial Writing
- Entrepreneur
- Instrumental Music
- Journalism
- Photography
- Vocal Music

email: projectlpie@gmail.com
webpage: lpie.org/project-lpie

Private Coaching During Lockdown

With the cancellation of sports, student-athletes turn to private coaching for training

Miller Smith | Staff Writer

Blueprint Photo/Emma Uffleman

Over the past months, athletes across the country have found different ways to practice during the lockdown, leading to a major increase in private coaching services. Ever since March 2020, high school sports have yet to return to California, leading student-athletes to turn to private coaching to maintain and improve their skills.

Private coaching focuses on developing and improving an athlete's individual skill set and allows athletes to work on specific personal goals, as they are not bound by other athletes in a traditional team setting. This gives athletes the opportunity to work on what they want and when they want during one-on-one coaching sessions.

"During private lessons, I work on individual technical adjustments that I can work on in team practices and apply in games. Private lessons are where I break my game down to the smallest level to examine specific motions, especially for my baseball swing," baseball player and sophomore Mason Michlitsch said.

With private lessons, coaches can help athletes improve their skills in a more gradual and meticulous process. These lessons are also a great way to have fun while improving.

"Some of the things I focus on when I do lessons are mechanics, understanding the game, and ultimately having fun. At the end of the day, this is still a game and I want kids to be motivated when they come to work with me and keep them motivated through positive encouragement," Acalanes varsity baseball coach Connor Hornsby said.

However, private coaching isn't as easy as it seems. Safety guidelines and COVID-19 regulations serve as a roadblock for most lessons. At lessons, coaches must ensure the safety of players whether it's by wearing masks, sanitizing, or keeping socially distanced. The real problems come from facing safety guidelines regulated in cities and schools.

Since the start of the lockdown, many public facilities have closed to prevent gatherings and stop the spread of the virus. Consequently, coaches have experienced difficulty with trying to hold safe lessons.

"Some of the challenges with giving lessons during COVID other than creating a safe environment for each kid is actually finding a place to coach. So many schools, parks, and private facilities in our area, in particular, have shut down the use of outdoor activity. It had been very helpful having the support of those around me to still make this possible throughout this entire pandemic," Hornsby said.

Many teenagers since the start of lockdown have been left with great amounts of free time. This extra time has pushed many to train and practice their sport, in a one-on-one setting, more than ever.

"Lockdown was the reason I was able to do lessons with my coach John Torchio; [it's] a perfect opportunity for me to do more lessons because I would usually have a billion other things going on but now that lockdown has canceled most of my activities I can do more and more private lessons," football player and freshman Jake Boselli said.

Many, however, wonder if private coaches are necessary for athletes having to spend time and money on lessons.

"Private lessons are very helpful for baseball but are not necessary. The most important thing is to accumulate hours of practice time, whether it be alone, a lesson, or with the team. I do not think private lessons for football are as beneficial because it is much more of a team game, and lots of practice involves group drills" Michlitsch said.

Private coaching is a great way for many to improve, stay motivated, and grow as an athlete. But, once COVID comes to an end, many will likely stop taking, or in a limited capacity, lessons with the return of high school and club sports.

"Even after COVID, I will still take private lessons, but not as many. And even when I start playing for Cal Poly, there will still be private lessons with the coach each week," tennis player and senior Eliza Bates said.

Spring Sports Begin in Limited Fashion

Non-contact sports are among the first to start

Gabriella Gruber and Helen O'Neal | Staff Writers

Diving in a backyard pool, running through the neighborhood, and golfing on the front lawn has been replaced with social distancing, masks, and virtual meets. Although this is a step closer to normal sports competition, much must change before athletes can compete without restrictions.

Cross country, track and field, swimming and diving, tennis, and golf seasons began on Feb. 1, adhering to new safety guidelines, including a health screening service and following tiers that determine the risks of different sports. Additionally, more spring sports will commence in March, so long as guidelines permit them.

There are four different colored tiers concerning the risks of different sports which determine what sports can play within the current amount of COVID-19 cases. The first tier, purple, allows outdoor non-contact sports. The second tier, red, includes outdoor sports that require minimal contact. The third tier, orange, is made up of outdoor contact sports and indoor non-contact sports. The fourth and final tier, yellow, includes all previously permitted sports along with indoor contact sports.

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) set up safety guidelines for the start of sports seasons. These regulations determined the order in which sports could start.

"The CDPH looked at different aspects of the different sports, to figure out what is the least and most [safe] sport. So, if you look at [the sports that just started], all of those sports are non-contact. They're also all outdoors. So, they're considered the least risky and that's why they were able to open in the purple tier," Athletic Director Randy Takahashi said.

New rules have been put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including wearing masks, social distancing, and a daily online health screening via Company Nurse.

Student-athletes alike are grateful COVID-19 restrictions did not impact some of the lower-risk sports and prevent the start of the season.

"Thankfully playing a sport like golf, where you are normally always socially distanced, the virus didn't impact my sport, therefore it didn't impact my decision [on doing sports this year]," golf player and sophomore Kendall Geddes said. "I am lucky to play a sport that is safe in a time like this and I am glad I was able to get out and practice so I could still improve over the school year."

Several sports have already experienced practice cancellations due to reports of students possibly being infected with the virus.

"We've actually had a few incidents already [of someone testing positive]," Takahashi said. "We go strictly by the county guidelines. If a student was with someone who ends up testing positive, that's considered an exposure and they may be either positive or negative. We have to shut the entire team down for 24 hours, to determine the extent of the potential exposure of others and what we have to do. After those 24 hours, we determine who's going to be pulled out for ten days and who can continue."

Despite the possible exposure incidents, many students are not that worried about contracting the virus through sports.

"Someone had [COVID] on the swim team and the people reacted really fast, so I think everything is good. I think it is pretty [safe], we are doing the best that we can," swimmer and sophomore Catherine Judson said.

Even with the new restrictions and guidelines, some athletes feel that practices have continued in a relatively normal fashion.

"I do cross country, so not too much has changed. The beginnings of practice are different because we have to stay apart, but when we do our runs [it] feels pretty normal," cross country runner and junior Andreas Ramirez said.

Many athletes claim that the main change they have experienced, in comparison to previous years, is a lack of team bonding.

"We have to be safe and we can't come together, which I think would strain the bond we could create," tennis player and sophomore Luke Brightbill said.

This has also kept some athletes, that have not started their sports yet, undecided about whether or not they want to continue their sport this season.

"I'm not sure if I'm going to play tennis this season, but probably not," tennis player and sophomore Analese Ruczynski said. "Last year, I really looked forward to all the activities our team would participate in, the places we would go. Especially with COVID, a lot of players are missing that team aspect. I just feel like we're rushing to get the tennis season in instead of taking our time to also enjoy it as players."

Despite concerns, the amount of students registered for spring sports has not significantly changed.

"Now, the participation is a little bit lower, but not a lot. Boys tennis, which just started, has two full teams which are the same size as usual. The track and field team is not in full go yet, but it looks like they may not have as many as usual. Swimming, we thought it would be down, we usually have about 85, and this year already we have 70. We're still getting a lot of participation," Takahashi said.

Blueprint Photo/Lue Van Handel

Some sports have also elected to host virtual meets against other schools and meets within their own teams to bring back a sense of normalcy.

Cross Country is planning on having their first virtual match against Las Lomas and Northgate on Feb. 20. The teams are planning to run the same course, but at different times, and later combine the results.

Even with all the changes and moving parts, many students are grateful and excited about sports finally starting back up again.

"I think the positive effects of starting sports during the pandemic are getting teams back together and kids being able to play together again. There has obviously been a lot of social disconnect within the last year because of the pandemic and I think that being able to play sports again will not only heal some of that but will also bring students back together," Geddes said.

Students believe that sports are a way they can improve participation at school during distance learning.

"Sports are a very great way to get involved in school [during the pandemic], and it is very safe," diver and freshman Grace Chehlaoui said.

The Warriors: Using Influence to Spur Change

Why the Warriors are a shining example of how athletes should use their platforms

Tom Bequette | Online Sports Editor

"Stick to sports," -- for years, professional players and coaches alike got held under this simple mantra by fans seeking an escape from the stress of politics. But a new era of sports activism has dawned and nobody is leading the way better than the Golden State Warriors.

Over the past decade, sports activism has experienced a renaissance unlike any seen before it. Larger-than-life athletes like Lebron James and JJ Watt donate millions of dollars to charities, and teams have boycotted games to spread awareness for important causes.

Sports activism's sudden rise is due to many factors, but primarily social media, which acts as the most common medium for players to express their support for specific causes.

Ever since various social media platforms like Twitter and Instagram blew up, a unique platform has been given to anybody with an opinion and a decent Wifi connection.

And while this has granted a large audience to dangerous movements like the Capitol raid and conspiracies like the storming of Area 51, some utilize the platform for good. The Black Lives Matter movement received a huge boost from public figures addressing and publicizing the movement, allowing it to grow to the size it did.

And it is a risky business giving anyone, especially athletes, such an important responsibility, but thankfully for the Bay Area, no one has used the platform more maturely and produced better results than the Golden State Warriors.

Owner Joe Lacob made one of the first notable political stances in the NBA when he fired Mark Jackson in 2014, mainly because of homophobic remarks made to the media. By not compromising their morals for winning, they set a precedent in the organization about how to act and emphasized to players the importance of positively influencing their community.

As the Warriors set up their community foundation in 2012, which has given a total of 12 million dollars to the community since its founding, staff and other players have followed their lead. Additionally, the Warriors donated one million dollars to the COVID disaster relief fund in the past year and created a small business impact series designed to help small businesses in the community.

Individual players have also taken on the responsibility by protesting and volunteering in the community. Warriors point guard Stephen Curry even teamed up with Barack Obama to promote My Brother's Keeper Alliance, a foundation aimed to build safe and supportive communities for young boys and people of color to guarantee they reach their fullest potential. He also has partnered with multiple charities like the Animal Rescue Foundation, the United Nations Foundation, and Nothing But Nets.

Players and coaches alike have also spread their political messages to their fans, as in 2017 and 2018 the Warriors twice turned down the tradition of visiting the White House after their championship wins in the name of taking a stand against President Trump's administration.

Warriors head coach Steve Kerr has been especially outspoken against the Trump administration, as he relentlessly criticized the insurrection at the Capitol and Trump's role in spurring the attack. He also displayed the utmost support for Colin Kaepernick's protest in 2016 and has recently become an outspoken activist for the gun control movement.

"I realized that I should try to make an impact politically when during the 2016 finals we had about four moments of silence for victims of gun violence," Warriors Head Coach Steve Kerr said at a press conference earlier this year. "But no one did anything about it besides those moments, so I realized that since we had this giant stage available to us, it was our duty to do what we could for our community."

The Warriors' activism does not end with them; their fans follow their example to help spur change.

"Seeing all of these people step forward in the name of change is incredibly inspiring and makes me want to help spread reform and change into our society," junior Aidan Shvo said.

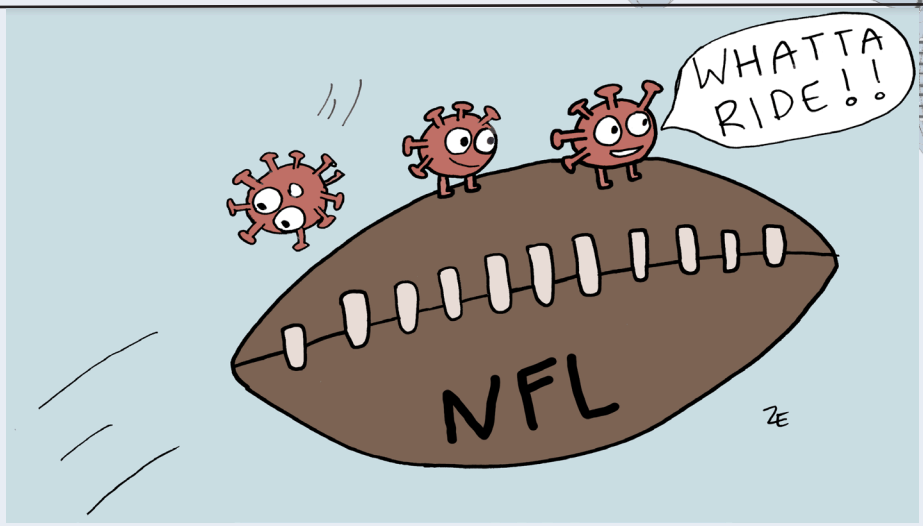
There is no telling for sure what this new age, where stars wield the most influence in our society, will create. If icons use their new-found platform irresponsibly or just to grow their brand, important change will not happen. But if enough stars follow the Warriors precedent of using their influence to spread positivity and bring about change, the limits for change remain as wide as Steph Curry's 3-point range -- limitless.

NOAH'S NOTION

Super Bowl Analysis

A look at what went down on Super Bowl Sunday

Noah Glosson | Head Section Editor



Blueprint Cartoon/Zoe Edelman

Super Bowl Sunday is a staple ritual for many across the country; both relatives and friends gather every February to watch the best teams in the country play. Since 1967, the National Football League (NFL) has held 54 super bowl games with millions of fans tuning in on their televisions. This year will be no different despite some major changes.

This year, the NFL hosted Super Bowl LV in Tampa Bay, Florida. For the first time ever, a Super Bowl participant, this time the Buccaneers, played a Super Bowl game in their home stadium. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the NFL limited attendance to just 22,000 fans, making this the smallest crowd for a Super Bowl contest. Future Hall of Famer and current Buccaneers quarterback Tom Brady battled it out with rising superstar and Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes.

The game started with both teams going three and out, resulting in both teams punting. On their second drive, Kansas City manufactured an 8-play, 31-yard drive that ended with a 49-yard field goal by kicker Harrison Butker. The Chiefs went ahead 3-0.

Brady, however, knows how to lead his team. Down by three points early, Brady and the Buccaneers put together a 9-play, 77-yard drive capped off by an 8-yard touchdown pass to tight end Rob Gronkowski, Brady's longtime friend and teammate since they were both New England Patriots.

The Buccaneers, throughout the entire half, swarmed Patrick Mahomes and put terrific coverage on stars Tyreek Hill and Travis Kelce. One throw to Tyreek Hill almost led to a touchdown downfield but solid coverage from the Tampa Bay secondary prevented that.

Taking advantage of the offensive missteps by the Chiefs, Brady marched down the field and delivered a 17-yard touchdown strike to Gronkowski again. The defense kept it up and the Bucs scored before the end of the half, making the score 21-6 after 30 minutes of football.

After a bizarre halftime show with The Weekend, the Buccaneers kept on dominating the game. The defense was superb as Mahomes scrambled and escaped the pocket all night long. There were times where Mahomes made acrobatic plays that nearly ended in a touchdown. Regardless, the Chiefs couldn't find momentum or construct drives that ended in touchdowns.

Tampa Bay's defense held steady all night long. Buccaneers linebacker Devin White was terrific as he totaled 12 tackles and an interception for Tampa Bay. The Chiefs never reached the end zone as the Buccaneers won by a final score of 31-9.

Tom Brady won his seventh Super Bowl ring and solidified his position as an all-time great. At 43 years old, Brady proved once again father time was no match for him. Brady expects to continue playing until he is 45 and possibly even beyond that, while many thought Brady wouldn't last much longer. Commentator Max Kellerman predicted in 2016 that Tom Brady was "just about done." Since then, Brady has three super bowl titles, an MVP award, and two super bowl MVPs.

As for Mahomes, the 25-year old gunslinger still has incredible talent. He played his heart out the entire game with little help. He is still the best quarterback in the NFL right now and will only get better. Mahomes already has a super bowl, an MVP, and other impressive accolades. There is no reason to doubt his greatness.

The Buccaneers shut down the Chiefs' defense while Tom Brady and the offense did their part. The Super Bowl commercials were mediocre at best and many expected more. It was a subpar super bowl in the end. Patrick Mahomes and the Chiefs never unleashed their full power, but hopefully this will change next year for Super Bowl LVI in Inglewood.

layout by zoe edelman

Sports Betting Among Students

Is the unpredictability of sports betting a deterrent for students

Kyle Bielawski, Saylen Cardoni, and Andrew Habas | Staff Writers

Every year, millions of Americans participate in sports betting in hopes of striking it rich. The system, however, does not favor the bettors in the ways they imagine. In 2017 alone, Americans lost 107 billion dollars betting on sports.

While a large portion of sports betting is amongst adults, high school students take a similar approach to betting on sports whether it's with family, friends, or a larger group, although the vast majority of students are reluctant because of the high-risk involved.

"I think people are hesitant to bet on sports because they can be so unpredictable, with lots of luck involved," sophomore Tyler Gough said.

The truth is, in most mainstream sports betting the odds are almost always against the bettor. Just like normal betting, betting platforms and services need to make money, utilizing sneaky and intriguing methods of promotion to draw potential 'customers' in. Although some people may have luck beating the system, the average person will lose money betting on sports.

"It could be to compete against a friend or make a few bucks, but you shouldn't be reliant on betting money on sports," Gough said.

Sports betting requires bettors to take risks and at the end of the day, the team a person chooses to bet on is simply an opinion. No matter how solid or perfect a bet may seem there will always be the possibility of losing it.

Within sports betting, there are various kinds of bets with the most common form being a straight bet. A straight bet means betting that a certain team will go above or below the point spread, which is how many points are added or reduced from a team's total in order to make the bet fair. Other formats include total line bets, money line bets, parlay bets, teaser bets, and head-to-head bets.

Despite the numerous bets that bettors can place on ordinary games, a majority of people tend to bet on big events like the Super Bowl, which draws a larger crowd for people looking to make fun bets against family and friends.

"I bet [with my dad that] the Bucs would win, and they did so I was pretty happy about that. Even though they were the underdog, I was confident the Bucs were gonna win because of Tom Brady's history in the Super Bowl," sophomore Kaleo Feinberg said.

While research and prior knowledge are typical factors consistent bettors take into consideration, many people that bet occasionally and for fun rely more heavily on luck.

Other forms of sports betting such as Fantasy Football and March Madness are popular amongst friends. Unlike typical bets, Fantasy Football and March Madness may require a great deal of research for people wishing to maximize their chances of doing well, but there is of course some luck involved.

"I actually won my Fantasy league this year, and I think the time I put in helped with that, although some luck did play in," Feinberg said.

Fantasy Football primarily serves as an entertainment game to compete with friends, with the addition of bonus cash prizes for the winner. In contrast, mainstream methods of sports betting generally require that the bettor does a great deal of research and thought to hopefully ensure they are successful.

"There's a key difference [between] gambling [and fantasy football]. [With gambling] you're putting all your trust in something that you just trust is gonna happen for literally no reason if you want to be lucky, whereas with betting, you have research, there's reasoning why you [do it]," Feinberg said.

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